Spanning the Pacific

John Prentice Langley

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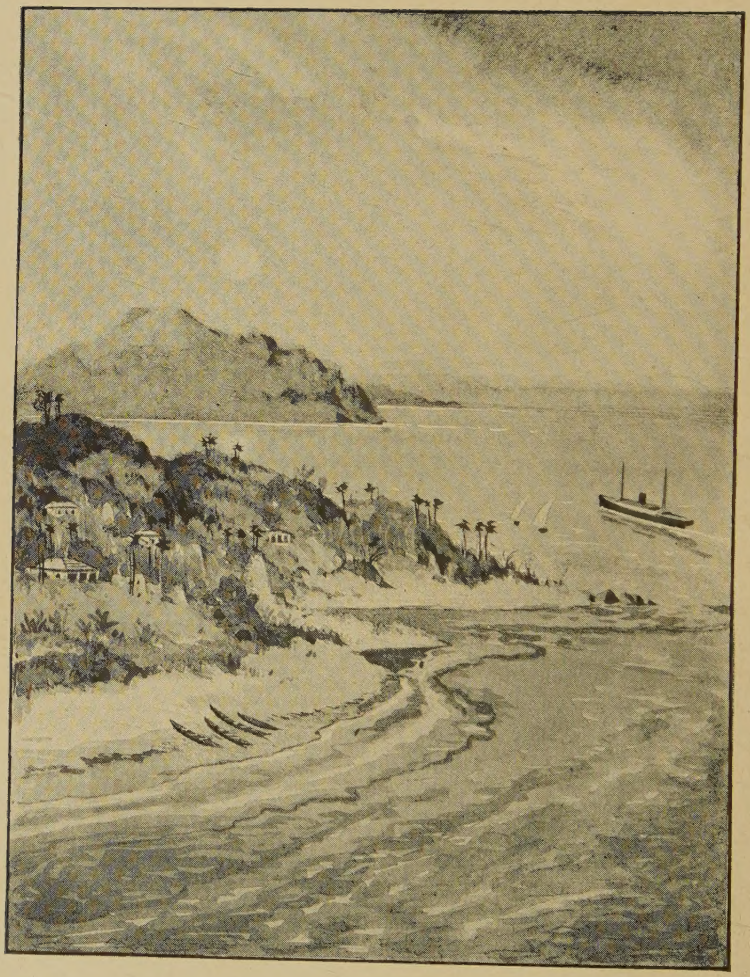

The *Pathfinder* nearing Honolulu.

(Spanning the Pacific) *(Frontispiece)*

SPANNING THE PACIFIC

OR

A Non-stop Hop to Japan

BY

JOHN PRENTICE LANGLEY

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SPANNING THE PACIFIC

CHAPTER I

AWAITING ORDERS

"This is Saturday, I figure. How about it, Old Sport Amos?"

"Sure thing, Danny."

"And July the ninth, in the bargain?"

"You said it—but what's gone wrong, Danny, to make you pull such a long face?"

"I'm growin' stale, with just this hangin' around, that's what. Mr. Carstairs in that letter all about the big jump, said we'd likely get a wire from him in a couple of days, tellin' us to climb aboard our bus, and hop out for 'Frisco Bay, where he'd be waitin' to see the grand start made. Huh!"

"That's what he did say, Danny; but it's foolish to get so worked-up over a little hold-back. Something's happened to delay his plans a bit. Don't forget this is a sure-enough he-man's job we're aiming to tackle, and of course he's had to do heaps of cabling across the seas, regardless of expense, to make all necessary arrangements

about extra wheels, pontoons, gas supplies, and such stuff; so there won't be any hitch to our swing, once we get going ahead."

That was a long speech for Silent Amos Green, "Cool" Amos he was called, former United States air-mail pilot, to make. He had always been a man of few words but intense action at all times. His best chum, Danny Cooper, crack navigator and mechanician, also late of the same select government service, realized this fact and showed his appreciation by means of several nods, after which he remarked:

"Huh! Guess that's so, Amos, and our manager, Mr. Carstairs, as he wants to be called, is some crackerjack of a manager, I'll tell the world."

"And while we've been waiting here in this secluded bay we've tuned the *Pathfinder's* whirlwind motor to above par besides trying her out a few times with those new-fangled aluminum pontoons, which work as fine as silk."

"A boss trick, I allow, Pard Amos, like everything else connected with our ship—hardly any weight at all, and yet as strong and capable as any boats I've ever clapped eyes on. They'll do their stunt, or I'll eat my hat."

From where they were seated on a ridge of sand they could look upon a cozy little sheltered bay, while beyond lay the mighty Pacific, stretching out thousands on thousands of leagues, past Hawaii and Midway Island to the far-distant

shores of mysterious Japan, war-racked China, Singapore, the Philippines and Australasia.

At the bend of the snug harbor a low, rough-looking frame building that was more than a shed, housed the sturdy plane known to them as the *Pathfinder,* in which these two adventurous, fearless former air-mail pilots had only recently, in secret, followed gallant Lindbergh's course from New York to Paris, and in less than two days started on the return trip, accomplishing the western passage in safety.*

Their backer in this stupendous enterprise was a noted millionaire sportsman, of Virginia, who for good reasons preferred to be known only as Mr. Carstairs. He had been an American ace during the trouble "over there," and was decorated by the French President with a badge of honor that any man might envy.

His heart being wrapped up in the future of aviation in all its scientific aspects, Mr. Carstairs had allowed himself to indulge in world-wide romantic dreams regarding the wonderful possibilities that were now presented to bold aviators, backed by all the recent inventions intended to make the air safe for universal flying.

Like many other enthusiastic followers of the sport he firmly believed the science of aeronautics had reached such a high level that really the flights of even a Jules Verne imagination could picture nothing that lay beyond the attainment of modern, fearless air-pilots, given the wonderful

* See the previous volume entitled: "Trail Blazers of the Skies: or Across to Paris, and Back."

inventions of recent days connected with their craft.

He had declared his belief after this fashion to another wealthy sportsman of the same class as himself, so that a unique wager was made between them. Unable personally to undertake the piloting of a plane, owing to his age and physical condition, the determined Mr. Carstairs, now enlisted heart and soul in the undertaking to prove his boast, began to look about for a young chap as near like Lindbergh as it was possible to retain. He turned to the air-mail service of Uncle Sam in order to attain his desires.

In "Cool Amos" Green he found the ideal object of his combing, a pilot who was never known to lose his head or betray excitement under any circumstances, devoted to his craft as a cloud-chaser, already famous as a parachute jumper, modest and retiring, with a positive hatred of all show or strutting before a howling mob of admirers.

Then, too, there was Danny Cooper, the pal of young Green, an admirable navigator, well experienced with all the intricate instruments of his calling, and only too eager to throw in his fortunes wherever Amos would lead.

They had carried out the initial stunt required by their rich patron, and were now waiting until he could complete far-reaching arrangements covering a second and much more ambitious undertaking, that of spanning the Pacific to Japan in a

non-stop hop, something that seemed to be utterly impossible, but which Mr. Carstairs firmly believed might be accomplished, if the conditions favored the adventurer, and certain new original ideas of his were feasible.

Danny was a clever navigator, and almost as daring as his chum, but he lacked the astonishing coolness of Amos in times of peril. He believed that Amos could wriggle out of any sort of difficulty, so rapidly did his brain think and his hands start working things out. Consequently he had fallen into the habit of depending on his comrade for doing most of the thinking, a condition that Amos liked none too well and which he was doing his best to remedy.

While they were thus held in suspense, occupying themselves by working out various experiments with the *Pathfinder*,—changed into a seaplane for the time being by their replacing landing wheels with up-to-date pontoons—Danny had been industriously scouring all the big papers of the country upon which he could lay hands in the library of a near-by city.

He found what he was looking for, too—numerous items in the columns devoted to aeronautics hinting at a belief expressed in some quarters to the effect that it seemed almost as though there must be a mighty and mysterious underground current at work in certain aviation circles. No one seemed able to locate the source of these strange rumors, even the keenest of newspaper

scribes groping in vain to find something tangible amidst the blinding fog, but continuing to rest firmly in the belief that some powerful syndicate was secretly working on unknown yet stupendous plans calculated to astound the whole world when they were ready to divulge the truth.

Danny, who had spent some time among cattle ranchmen and cowboys, declared again and again that for once those clever news gleaners, who believed themselves so shrewd that nothing could escape their eagle eyes, found they were "locoed" and running wild on every sort of false trail. He had even talked with some of the boys and afterwards laughed himself almost sick over the astonishing guesses in which they had indulged, so wide of the actual truth were they.

Long before this time Lindbergh was back in his native country, a widely acclaimed hero of heroes; Chamberlin and Levine had crossed the Atlantic in their great plane, the *Columbia,* landing in Germany close to Berlin; Commander Byrd, of North Pole fame, and three companions had flown across to France in the *America;* and last but not least, two army officers, Lieutenants Maitland and Hegenberger, succeeded late in June in crossing to Honolulu from San Francisco in an enormous army monoplane.

The entire world thrilled with these amazing triumphs over the upper air currents, so that most people, in America especially, had fallen into the habit of saying to themselves as they picked up

their daily papers: "Well, I wonder what record in aviation has been smashed since yesterday morning."

Long and seriously had Danny Cooper pored over the tremendous plan of campaign that was to compose their next undertaking, for several things puzzled him vastly as he freely admitted. So on this same afternoon, while resting after a strenuous morning up among the clouds, with the heaving waters of the majestic Pacific far, far below, his thoughts again grappled with some of those matters which as yet he could not quite comprehend.

"You've explained most of the things that got my goat, Amos," he observed, presently, causing his companion to smile in his usual captivating fashion—it *was* a charming smile that always won him friends wherever he went—"but there's something about that job of filling our gas tanks while flying, out there near Hawaii, that I'll be hanged if I *do* clutch. What bothers me is the *danger,* always present, when they're running the fresh supplies down through a slender hose, from the big plane hovering just overhead. Course I understand it *can* be done, having seen all kinds of stunts put through, and even slid down a rope myself from the upper to the lower crate, but if the fumes of the running gas should be ignited by our motor sparks, whew! both ships would be shattered to splinters."

"You never said truer words, Danny," Amos

assured him, with that cool gleam in his eyes that Danny always built his faith on; "under ordinary conditions I'd say the risk was too great for any one but a crazy pilot to assume."

Danny, vastly interested, kept his eyes glued on those of his companion, realizing as by some subtle instinct, that the time had come for Amos, who always knew so much more than any one else did, to lift the curtain and take him wholly into his confidence. Whatever it was the other had learned from Mr. Carstairs must sooner or later be passed along, for was he not an equal sharer in all the perils of each and every venture they undertook, and should he not be "put wise" to such things as actually concerned their safety?

"I have come out this afternoon," continued Cool Amos, "fully prepared to prove to you how, thanks to the clever discovery of a certain man whom we'll call John Smith, though it isn't his real name, that the danger has been greatly reduced, if not wholly put out of the running, with this new Fool Proof gasoline."

CHAPTER II

NECESSITY FINDS A WAY

Danny Cooper continued to stare at his companion although it could be seen that he was considerably thrilled by what Amos had said. As was his habit this condition proved but temporary, when his lips moved and in almost a whisper he breathed the words:

"Fool Proof Gas—hot dog! that sounds good to me. Lead me up to it, brother, and put me wise. It's like a dream come true—great stuff!"

Amos rose to his feet. From one pocket he extracted a small phial that had a label pasted on its front containing the mystic letters "F.P.G.," and Danny noting this understood. From another pocket did Amos pull out a duplicate little bottle which was unmarked but contained some liquid of a dubious, light yellow color.

He seemed to have come fully prepared for the anticipated experiment, since he next produced two empty jelly glasses, each of which would hold a dozen or more tablespoonfuls of liquid; into the first he deliberately poured some of the fluid from the first phial, and followed by duplicating the performance with a portion of the second bottle's pale looking contents.

Last of all he set the two jelly glasses on the

sand some five feet apart, took out his handy knife, split the point of a stick he had picked up, that was some five feet in length, lighted a match, inserted it in the cloven end of the rod and then pushed it toward the first glass receptacle.

Danny had already sniffed the pungent odor of gasoline, so he was not a particle surprised to see a sudden puff of flame and smoke mark the approach of the burning match to the vicinity of the glass.

"Hot dog! that made the grade all right! Real stuff or I'll eat my hat. Now shoot and let's see what you've got up your sleeve, Amos, you schemer!"

Another match, a steady movement toward the second glass—now the tiny blaze hovered just above the rim and was moved gently back and forth—nothing happened. It appeared as though simply water was being used.

Danny stared with distended eyes and parted lips. As a veteran air-mail pilot only too well did he know what an invaluable asset this must prove to men who risked their lives among the clouds, to all those who drove motors at break-neck speed along the roads of the country, to the world at large, and that the name of John Smith, or Richard Roe, or whatever the cognomen might be of the discoverer, would go down the ages as that of a benefactor to mankind.

Next Amos twisted part of the newspaper Danny had been reading as they sat there talking

of the fresh adventure that beckoned just beyond the horizon, put a match to the end, stepped closer to the glass that had declined to explode and thrust the blaze into its top. Followed an eruption exactly similar to that of the first experiment.

"Zowie! it sure worked, Amos!" exclaimed the deeply interested Danny, his face wreathed in a wide grin; then of a sudden he frowned as though some depressing thought had gripped him. "But then, when the gas has been made safe against fool carelessness, as seems to be, why, that's bound to render it next door to useless for motor use. Too bad, I'm comin' out of a beautiful dream, feels like."

Amos had a turn at grinning as he fixed his pal with his eye.

"Don't judge a thing until you know *all* the facts, Danny," he was saying contentedly. "I tried out this game myself, unbeknown to you, and was just about as skeptical about proving its worth. But I'm as sure of it now as that we went to Paris and back."

"Shoot!" gasped Danny, evidently in a bit of a tail-spin and out of control, what with all the nervous tension he was enduring.

"You mean, I reckon," continued Cool Amos steadily and convincingly, "that such adulterated gas wouldn't explode with enough force to let a motor do its full work. Seems plausible too, I'll admit, but that's just where this wizard of the chemist's laboratory managed to get in his won-

derful work. We had a pretty good knock-around this morning, you'll admit, Danny?"

"We sure did. The ship never has been so clever in answering to the stick, every stunt we played worked like a charm, and once I tried my level best to put her in a spin but she just declined to kick. Yes, we had a glorious run this morning, that's right, Amos, boy."

"And speed?" went on the other, with glistening eyes, "how about that?"

"I told you then we'd gone ahead of anything she'd marked up before. You remember I said the motor kept on improving with service and would soon do stunts of its own to make us sit up and take notice. But see here, you don't mean to tell me—was it this *mixed* stuff we had along with us this very day? Get a move on you, partner, and make me wise, if you don't want to have me pile up in a wash, and bust the boiler; I'm keyed up to the limit, I tell you."

Amos nodded his head eagerly and smiled in the red face of his chum.

"Before you got back from the city I had every drop of the old gas taken out and fifty gallons of the Fool Proof stuff stowed away in the tank. Does that kill your suspicion it wouldn't ever work in the wide world?"

Danny let out his breath in a convulsive gasp.

"Hot dog!" he exclaimed, as though nothing could possibly express his feelings at that exciting moment so well as his favorite explosion. "I

always heard that necessity is the mother of invention, and say, I'm believing it more every day I live. That's the one thing needed above all others! No wonder they declare nothing is impossible these days, when one miracle follows another in an endless procession. There'll be a big hurrah among all air pilots now that a whole lot of the danger is going to be mopped up and the air made a heap safer for those who sail the cloudlands up yonder."

"Listen, Danny," Amos was saying, seriously. "We've got to keep our lips buttoned as tight as glue about this new discovery gas. It's in the contract between Mr. Carstairs and the inventor —er, John Smith. Seems he isn't quite ready to throw his stuff on the market or even let it be known until his controlling company's been formed to handle it properly. I gave my word we'd keep the thing a dead secret and I expect you to follow suit. Only for the fact of this chemist being a close friend of our promoter we wouldn't have been given the chance to make use of his new product."

"Lucky dogs that we are, eh, Amos," ejaculated Danny. "Seems like everything comes our way. Must be you're the magnet that draws 'em. Huh! reckon those boys knew what they were saying when they used to call you 'Lucky' Amos. Tell me, will that cargo of gas we expect to take aboard while on the wing off Hawaii be this same Fool Proof brand, eh, Amos?"

"Sure thing, Danny," came the reassuring reply, "besides we'll jump off with a full load. Mr. Carstairs wouldn't split hairs when testing a thing out so every drop we use in our long flight to Japan will be this new fuel that's going to upset aviation circles as they've never been stirred before."

"Well, for one thing, there's a big weight off my chest, if you care to know it, Amos," acknowledged the other, heaving a sigh of relief. "Ever since you explained how we were going to refuel after the first twenty-four hundred miles I've been dreaming of explosions and such like; now that ghost's been settled for keeps I'll enjoy looking forward to our big jump a heap more than I was."

"Same here, Danny; but then I just seemed to *feel* something wonderful was bound to bob up to help make things easier. You talk about luck being in the game but you must know I take mighty little stock about all that stuff. With me an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. There are accidents that no man can anticipate but as a rule I've found carelessness is the main cause of most of the tragedies that happen to airmen these days. Some one has done his work while he whistles, with his mind on other things; then when the strain comes the weak strut gives way, a cylinder head blows out, or some other calamity grips the unfortunate pilot who's neglected to see to things for himself but left it all to the mechanics."

That was Amos Green's philosophy to a dot. Danny had heard him speak in a similar strain many a time and slowly but surely was coming to catch the spirit of its sober truth. Since his close association with Cool Amos he had by degrees altered many of his former ways and thus took out additional insurance on his life, since it all added to the prime idea of "safety first."

Danny lay back on the sand with a contented expression on his freckled face such as had not been visible for a number of days, in fact ever since Amos told him about that trick of refueling while on the wing away out there over the salty seas beyond Honolulu Harbor. Once again did his heart resume its customary lightness, for as a rule Danny Cooper had always been reckoned a merry soul, singing and cracking jokes when in the company of kindred spirits.

Amos, chancing to look that way, found him intently scrutinizing the sky above, and glancing aloft quickly discovered the object of his pal's interest. A tiny dot far up told of the presence of a soaring plane, and as is always the case it instantly riveted the attention of Amos.

When a man's whole life work centers along a special line he finds it impossible to tear himself away from that which haunts his dreams. They say that when an old locomotive engineer gets a day off he dresses up and loafs in the vicinity of the round-house, where he can chat with his fellows, criticize the work and have a good time generally. Should he go on a vacation nothing

attracts his attention so much as types of locomotives with which it happens he is unfamiliar.

"Some cuckoo, that chap up yonder," Danny observed, on noting the fact that his companion was also watching the moving dot pass in and out of the white patches of fleecy clouds. "A test pilot, I reckon, putting the new bus through her paces. There, he's shooting the chute, and making a juicy nose dive. Wow! he's got plenty of nerve, judgin' from the way he's splittin' the air in his drop."

Amos was no longer sitting quietly there as before enjoying the warm California sunshine. His practiced eye told him there was something wrong with the maneuver of the test pilot. He noted queer flutterings of the now plainly visible wings, as though they had lost a bit of their rigidity.

"He's trying like mad to get the joy-stick working right!" burst from his lips as Danny, too, struggled to his feet, staring and holding his breath, for only an experienced air pilot can fully comprehend the sinking sensation that grips the heart when trouble develops a full three thousand feet up in the air, and that numb sense of falling out of control preceding what is likely to be a deadly crash or a drop into the sea.

Without another word Amos started at breakneck speed racing over the sand toward that small house at the end of the dock, Danny close at his heels.

"He's trying like mad to get the joy-stick working right."

CHAPTER III

THE MAN FROM THE CLOUDS

"Hot dog! he's crashed!" bellowed Danny, as a distant but decided splash told the story of the imperiled pilot's final disposition.

Amos was unlocking the closed doors of the shed that harbored the big plane in which he and his pal had made that wonderful trip across the Atlantic and back again to New York. He did not waste a single second in trying to scan the bay, but plunged into the low, squat frame shanty, feeling certain that faithful Danny must be immediately behind.

The slide and platform had been greased in order to make the frequent launching of the boat much easier, so that in an emergency like this two pair of stout arms with willing hearts back of them would be able to start the plane down to the water.

There was not a single lost motion in the entire transaction. Trust Cool Amos for keeping his head about him, when Danny, left to his own devices, might have floundered a bit and thus endangered everything.

Both slipped aboard and were in the double cockpit by the time the pontoons kissed the surface of the bay. Amos was hovering over the

motor for he knew it would take a trick or so to get a cold engine going in hot haste.

Danny on his part was making good use of his knowledge, for this affair of launching from a float had been practiced numerous times recently. In consequence when the motor suddenly started the nose of the flying-boat was pointing directly to that quarter where last they had glimpsed the madly circling stranger plane as its excited pilot endeavored to lighten the expected shock of striking the water.

Now like a frightened duck the seaplane started to rush ahead, gathering fresh momentum with every passing second, until it was making furious time as became a boat of its high quality.

Amos found himself staring ahead anxious to learn what had become of the mysterious plane and its unlucky navigator. He knew very well that the craft itself, weighted down with its heavy engine, would sink quickly to the bottom of the bay, and that should the pilot have been unable in his fight for life to unfasten his belt, he was likely to accompany his boat under the waves that were rolling in from the ocean.

At first no object caught his eager gaze, and somehow Amos felt a sinking sensation at his heart under the belief that it was all over and they would arrive on the scene of the tragedy too late to be of any benefit. True enough, the unfortunate pilot was likely enough an utter stranger, but there are ties that bind together all

those who go up in airships, and never a man of the countless number but would strive to the utmost to lend a helping hand to a comrade in peril.

Then he felt sure he had glimpsed some object rise up on the crest of a long roller. It must have been a waving arm that vanished immediately after he had discovered it. The man was at least free from his ill-fated craft and struggling madly to keep himself afloat, although possibly badly injured by reason of bruises and cuts sustained on the dreadful impact with the water.

So Amos slid the throttle forward a little more. The exhaust was roaring furiously by this time while a foamy wave slid past on either hand as the pontoons parted the water or skipped over the crest of an unusually big roller.

Danny, too, was straining his vision, having also caught a fleeting glimpse of the hand that seemed to be wildly beckoning. His heart felt as though it were up in his throat on failing to see anything further of the object of their rush, and, indeed, it did seem as though all their furious haste was to be for nothing.

Suddenly Amos shut off the power and from this Danny sensed that they must have reached the spot, as near as his pal's judgment could determine. While he was distractedly looking to the right and then to the left, as the boat slackened its speed he saw the keen-eyed Amos thrust out his arm, make a quick motion and to Danny's utter

surprise as well as delight start to drag some object through the water.

This helped to obstruct the push of the boat so that within a dozen seconds Amos was able to hold the man's head above the surface. Then, with the ready assistance of his chum, he succeeded in dragging the unknown pilot into the cockpit.

The man was almost spent, and if left to himself another minute would have been beyond all aid. As it was he lay there drenched, bleeding from a number of cuts and looking a most disreputable object.

Amos bent over him with the intention of learning first of all just how serious those injuries might prove. Somewhat to his satisfaction he found they were mostly of a minor character. Although likely to be painful for some days or weeks to come it did not seem likely they would endanger the man's life, so that after all, thanks to the prompt work of the two observers of the accident, he would have his chance to fly again. Some aviators have the nine lives of a cat and keep on taking desperate chances until they finally run their string out.

"Huh! looks like a foreigner to me, eh, Amos?" Danny was observing as he noted the dark skin and black hair of the man they had rescued from a watery grave.

"As like as not," replied the other, nodding his head. "He may be a Spaniard or more likely a

Mexican air pilot. You know they have gone into this flying game down on the other side of the Rio Grande and, I've heard, are making some success at it. Daring men belong to no particular nation but can be found under every flag on earth."

"A greaser—and what would such a chap be doing stunts for away up here on the California coast I want to know?" Danny was muttering with a tinge of suspicion in both language and looks.

"Drop it, Danny," hissed Amos, quickly, "don't you see he's coming to? His eyes opened and shut again; now his eyelids are fluttering. He's going to come out of this O. K., I'm glad to say. Put that roll of stuff under his head so as to make him a bit more comfortable while I start back to the float."

With the initial roar of the motor their passenger started up to stare wildly about him, undoubtedly still under the impression that he was fighting madly to get his falling plane under control. Then, seeing the two boys and realizing that all danger was past he seemed to feel a great wave of emotion. For he gave them a grateful look and fell back again, so weak and exhausted had his wild battle with destiny made him.

They soon reached the float where a number of excited men stood watching their coming. First of all Amos saw to it that their passenger was gotten ashore. The stranger was still very weak

and in need of "first aid" to stop the bleeding, so Amos made up his mind on the instant. It was a time when the services of a Good Samaritan must follow those of rescuers.

"Danny, stay here and get some of these good chaps to lend a hand putting the boat to bed again. Be sure and lock the doors before you start for our shack. I'll help him along and we'll patch him up, and give him supper while about it. Some time it may be *our* luck to fall into the hands of his countrymen when we hope they'll treat us just as white."

Danny whistled and looked a bit dubious, but he had the utmost confidence in whatever Amos did or said. Yes, in his own experience had Danny Cooper known cases when bread cast upon the waters had returned ere many days, and he knew that a "good deed is never thrown away." Who could tell?

The stranger made a great effort and managed to walk slowly along at the side of Amos, who had thrown a sturdy arm about him. Once or twice he felt the other turn his head and look keenly at him as though laboring under some queer burst of emotion, but Amos, not seeing under the surface of events, had no suspicion as to what could be gripping the other's agitated mind.

When Danny later on reached the little rough shack they occupied in a rude sort of housekeeping fashion, so as to be as close as possible to their precious, world-beating plane, he found that

Amos had succeeded in binding up most of the contusions and stopping the flow of blood. The stranger was seated on a rickety chair and observing every move made by Amos as though hardly able to believe his eyes.

As a rule Danny did most of the "hash-slinging," as he termed his crude way of cooking, but having knocked about considerably on cattle ranches, and in Alaska mining camps during his more tender years Danny really was a bit of a cook. His greatest pride was in calling himself a "sour-dough," which in the Yukon country means an "old-timer."

As evening was now at hand, and appetites had to be considered, Danny lost no time in starting a fire, which he knew would be agreeable to the man they had rescued, helping to dry his clothes and prevent his having a chill.

Thus far the unknown pilot had spoken hardly a dozen words, though thanking Amos when the other had finished treating his wounds. He spoke excellent English, though it was easy to detect his being a Mexican from certain exclamations he used, as well as his way of pronouncing words with exactness as only a foreigner does.

When the simple but bountiful meal was ready, consisting for the most part of a juicy steak, with fried potatoes, bread and butter and coffee, Danny invited their mysterious guest to take his place, reserving a convenient box for his own seat. Still the other kept mute, though his roving black

eyes were never quiet and voiced the gratitude that must have filled his heart.

He listened to the chatter of the other pair as though finding it most interesting, though of course the boys were careful never to breathe a word of the momentous undertakings in which they were engaged heart and soul. Taking some casual remark by Amos as a cue, Danny dished up a little game that seemed to stamp them as secret test pilots for a well-known firm engaged in building new and novel motors as well as freak types of advanced-idea planes.

He seemed to enjoy enlarging on this gaudy theme for his eyes sparkled and his tongue ran on at a great rate, much to the amusement of his pal, who knew Danny's story-telling abilities of old.

Eagerly did the dark-faced stranger drink in every word uttered, which spoken with all seriousness by Danny seemed to bear the stamp of absolute truth. He even began to smile a bit as though drawn to the jolly young chap, a fact that Amos noted with pleasure. The man had something of an appetite, for he certainly did his share in disposing of the bountiful if homely spread.

He talked some, too, occasionally, toward the end of the meal, as though certain suspicions which he had been harboring were now utterly dissipated through observing his benefactors and listening to their boyish chatter, for although some twenty-five years of age, neither of them

had thus far lost their youthful enthusiasm which bubbled forth upon the slightest provocation, especially with whole-souled Danny Cooper.

When the two pals saw the Mexican commence to put on his now dried dungarees, well greased through constant use about the motor of a plane, they understood that he meant to leave them. He appeared somewhat anxious to be off, Danny noticed, as though he must attend to certain business that would not stand delay, or else felt that somehow that neighborhood might not be exactly safe for a person of his description.

His nervousness increased continually and he looked as though he might be struggling between battling emotions. Really he was now beginning to awaken the curiosity of not only Danny but Cool Amos as well. Who was he and what might be his business, so far away from the borders of his country, soaring up among the clouds as though spying upon some enemy's camp?

Perhaps they would never know once he said good-by after again thanking them for all they had done for him, and it would go down as one of those unsolved mysteries that are sometimes met with by adventurous souls.

He shook hands with each in turn trying to tell them just how he felt on account of their unselfish actions.

"Will you arrange to have your plane salvaged?" asked Amos. "If you care to go to the heavy expense it could be located and dragged to

the beach. It wouldn't be the first one either, to be hauled out of this bay, I assure you, sir."

That was the spark that touched him off. He clenched his hands fiercely, faced both boys and burst out like a volcano in action.

"Let my plane lie there and rot. I shall never try to save it! Before I leave here I am impelled by something here close to my heart to tell you how you have overwhelmed me with kindness and filled me with shame. To think that those same fellow airmen whose splendid craft I came up from across the border deliberately to destroy, actually saved my life and treated me like brothers of the blood!"

CHAPTER IV

SEÑOR JOSÉ REPENTS

DANNY COOPER had known Amos for some years. He had seen him many times rub up against astonishing things that thrilled him, Danny, through and through, causing his heart to beat like a trip-hammer. But this was really the very first occasion when he could say he saw his chum's habitual coolness visibly shaken.

When the dark-faced Mexican air pilot burst out with the astounding declaration that he had come to that part of the California coast bent on making a wreck of their fine boat, Amos turned a bit pale and held his breath. It was all so mysterious, so bordering on the impossible, that it actually staggered him.

"You're telling us something, señor," he presently remarked, after getting a strangle-hold upon his feelings, "that sounds a heap like a fairy story. I don't get the drift of your remark at all. Why should you want to smash our ship when neither of us, so far as I know, have ever set eyes on you before now; fact is, we don't even know your name."

The other shook his head and went on to explain.

"You may call me José Murcado, señors. I have

the advantage of you since I know you are one Amos Green and your companion is Danny Cooper, also that not so long ago both of you were flying in the air-mail service of your government."

When he paused Danny nodded as though only too proud to admit the facts as stated by the strange flier from across the border.

"Then suddenly you throw up your positions and disappear from your customary haunts. There are all sorts of wonderful stories about the new business you two aces have taken up. We hear some of this talk down there in Mexico, where rival generals are pitted against each other to succeed Calles in the President's chair, and, señors, these tales are magnified to an alarming extent in their frequent telling.

"Perhaps you may not know that there are unscrupulous men in Mexico who allow their soaring ambition to outstrip their patriotism, men who do not hesitate to endanger the friendly feelings between neighboring nations if only they may strengthen their own dark schemes.

"It has long been known that one of these parties in particular has played a lone hand, even, it is said, to employing certain unscrupulous air pilots of your own country to carry out a game of terrorizing, such as has aroused the indignation and anger of the President himself, who you know, plays no favorites in this many cornered political fight.

"We have many brigands south of the border. I confess it with shame, as an army flier and officer. These are men who once upon a time followed the fortunes of Villa and others like him. When they increase in numbers so as to be a thorn in the side of the government the regulars are sent against them, but they have secret hiding-places in the mountains, so that seldom do they stand up and engage in honorable battle.

"These bandits are said to be working in secret for a candidate who is opposed to the three generals now in the race. Wild stories have been told of a mysterious plane, manned by Yankee pilots, that drops bombs whenever these robbers attack a town, terrorizing the people and in some way threatening them with fresh outrages unless they promise their votes for this particular candidate when election day arrives.

"I myself heard so much about this swift-flying plane that in the end I determined to discover its hiding-place somewhere up here on the Coast. Following the clues that fell into my hands I finally came to this peaceful bay, and how suspicious it struck me that you two former air-mail fliers had a wonderful plane, secreted in a lonely shed, which you watched jealously day and night.

"Señors, you must forgive me if with my hot Mexican blood I could see only one explanation of the mystery surrounding your actions. One of your occasional absences came about the same

time that another brutal outrage was perpetrated on my helpless people. I thought that for gold you had sold yourselves and your honor to this scheming politician below the Grande.

"So, fired with righteous indignation, I was ready to accept all chances if only I could do my country a service. I give you my word of honor, señors, never did I seek your lives. It was simply to destroy your means for making those dreadful flights across the border whenever you received the signal your services were needed.

"I secured a number of bombs that I had learned to drop so accurately, and this very night I planned to swoop down, so close to your hangar that I could not possibly score a miss, and with one stroke scatter your plane to the four winds. Then, before any one could arrive in time to identify the mysterious plane, I would be on my way south.

"So I planned while swinging far up among the white clouds and counting the minutes that must elapse before I could accomplish my desperate purpose. But I reckoned without the will of Providence, señors; the only serious accident that has ever befallen me in my life as a pilot struck me as I hovered over my target waiting until the dusk came. Only for your prompt action Capitan José Murcado would have met the fate that hangs over the heads of all who brave the fury of the elements up among the clouds. You saved my life, you bound up my wounds, you fed me like

brothers, and my heart is heavy with humiliation to think how I could ever have fallen so low as to suspect you of such ignoble deeds as those, rumors of which are drifting about Northern Mexico, magnified many fold, I now am certain.

"I cannot say more except that I shall never, never forget what has happened. I go back to my homeland with new knowledge concerning the warm, brotherly feeling existing in the hearts of Yankee airmen. As to my *ship,* better far that it lie where it has sunk. Not for worlds would I wish it to be known that I carried deadly bombs as ballast, with which to destroy valuable property in a neighboring friendly country. Señors, I shake your hands once more and pray that you forgive an overzealous patriot who has been saved from making the greatest mistake of his whole life. *Adios,* señors, and may the good God guard you against all deadly dangers, wherever your field of action may lie."

With these last sincere words he opened the door and disappeared from their sight, nor did they ever expect to run across Señor José Murcado again. But you never can tell, since the mysterious ways of Dame Fortune are not to be guessed.

For a brief interval Amos and Danny stood there staring at one another; then the former chuckled as if the amusing side of the adventure suddenly appealed to his sense of humor. Of

course Danny had to give vent to his pet phrase several times in rapid succession, as if to relieve his bottled-up excitement.

"Did you ever hear of such a queer happening in all your life?" Danny was saying, shaking his head from side to side. "Seems like one of the rotten dreams I sometimes used to have after a particularly stormy trip through fog and snow-squalls when crossing the Rockies with the mail. Do you really reckon what he told us was true or has the poor chap got bats in his belfry, eh, Amos?"

"I watched his face while he talked, Danny, and having some knowledge of the Mexican, hot-blooded ways of starting trouble I was convinced he told a straight story, though it does seem next to a fairy tale, I admit."

"He lost his crate, anyhow," the other went on to say, reflectively, "and is going to feel right sore with all those bruises and cuts he got when the ship turned turtle on him just before they struck the water. He had one chance in ten to pull out alive, and I reckon he knows what a close call it was. That made him feel pretty warm toward his gallant rescuers, eh, what?"

"We'd better keep the whole business dark, I imagine," pursued Cool Amos, "telling only Mr. Carstairs the strange yarn."

"Guess you're right there," admitted the other. "For one thing, never a living soul among air pilots could we convince that such a remark-

able adventure had come to us. It sure beats the Dutch what can happen to the boys who cut new trails through the clouds. Talk to me about your Arabian Nights, Baron Munchausen stories and all that, why we've got 'em beat to a frazzle these modern days."

"Queer as this adventure seems to us," Amos continued, reflectively, "it may turn out to be not in a class with some things we'll be apt to rub up against in all sorts of foreign lands, if we're so lucky as to come through with our lives."

"Well," sighed Danny Cooper, "here's another day dragged along and nothin' doin' yet. You don't reckon our boss has changed his mind about that Japan knock-out, found it too stiff a job to tackle? It'd break my heart to have to knuckle down again to the old dick of carryin' mail-bags after just a sniff of freedom and real stuff along the line of doing great stunts!"

"Don't bother your head about Mr. Carstairs backing down," advised Amos, with supreme confidence. "He isn't built that way, and you remember he told us to keep testing the ship and those new instruments until we got his signal to run up to San Francisco Harbor, where he'd be waiting with all wrinkles smoothed out and everything arranged. You'll have to admit, Danny, it's bound to be some big job fixing things so that if he sends word to us over there in Tokio we'll be ready to take off and circle the globe in a way to beat all records."

"That's what it is, Pard Amos; the longer I think of all that's got to be put through in such a short time the more I feel like taking off my hat to the fine gentleman and saying he's some boss schemer and organizer. I'll try to hold in my horses a while longer, knowing that once the word comes sailin' this way the grand circus starts in full swing to end, nobody knows when and where. It makes me dizzy just to think of what wonderful things are beckoning to us old air-mail boys these glorious days."

Nevertheless it was likely that impatient Danny spent an uneasy night, for Amos knew he tossed and turned on the army cot close at his side as if even in his dreams he might be meeting with all sorts of troubles peculiar to dare-devil souls of his perilous calling.

So another day dawned, with those clear California skies overhead, and more testing of "furniture," as Danny called it, to be the order of the morning. Since they came back from Paris a number of improvements had been made in the plane itself and several new instruments had been installed, so that on their next voyage they would be in much better condition to meet all eccentricities of the fickle weather.

CHAPTER V

THE CALL TO SERVICE

"WHAT's the order of the day, Amos?" asked Danny Cooper when they had finished breakfast and cleaned up, for such systematic lads as the partners always made it a rule to have a "clear field" after each and every meal.

"We'll take a short run first," decided the other without an instant's hesitation, proving that as usual he was "prepared" and had considered a program before the time came for it to be put into practice. "A last trial of that new compass, so we can start off dead sure it's as reliable as anything can be in this world."

"Yes," agreed Danny, "and I'm certain right now it's never going back on us like our first earth-inductor did, just when we needed it right smart."

"Then we must give our ignition starter a hard test; I had a little suspicion yesterday when we boomed off in such a rush it held back a mite longer than I liked. May have been that I expected something more than was possible, but it's just as well to manage that sort of helper so it'll begin to play at the first ball pitched."

"Huh! it will or you c'n take my head for a football," Danny assured his pal with one of his

cheery grins. "How about our new radio you've installed so it really takes up hardly any room at all?"

"We've tried that out in the shanty here, both receiving and sending, with never a fault to find. I'm dead certain we could make ourselves heard within a couple of hundred miles, if the time came when in a fog we wanted to speak to any steamer to learn our location. If we'd had the set aboard when groping our way through that pea-soup off the fishing banks up New Foundland way we'd have been able to steer a straighter course for New York."

"Don't see how that could be," grunted the skeptical navigator, "when we hit the Long Island coast right off the bat, with only a jump to our landing field. But then there's nothing like being doubly sure when you're staking everything you've got in the world on making no blunder."

"This is likely to be our very last chance to make these important tests," advised Amos, "there must be no leaks, no shortage of gas, such as gave us so bad a scare on our skip back across the Atlantic."

"Huh!" Danny remarked, with a gleam in his steady eyes, "depend on me standin' close by when we take on our full cargo of this new-fangled gas; tricky mechanics don't slip another little game on us and leave us clipped of fuel, like those chaps over at Le Bourget Aviation Field did—either through design or mistake. I've never

quite decided which it might be. Seems there's some wind this morning Amos, after all the quiet night."

"All the better for our last trial spin!" snapped Cool Amos. "I'd be satisfied to have it blow great guns. If there's going to be any soft spot show up now's the time to find it out so we can apply the remedy before hopping off."

"The thing I'm afraid of—and the only thing, I'm telling you, Amos—is that our feed system might develop some sort of breakdown, the connections play us a trick such as springing a leak. If a pilot is able to make a forced landing that defect can be taped and made strong enough to hold out, but in our case the sea might be a bit too rough for us to drop down or we might be up above the clouds when it happened."

"I've gone over every bit of the feed system inch by inch," replied Amos, steadily, "and to my mind it couldn't be more reliable. If an accident does hit us it's more likely to spring up in a way we've never taken into consideration. All of us air pilots have to take chances, no matter how carefully we play safe. Let's go, Danny."

Shortly afterwards the flyingship had been launched and both were settled in their respective places. By now they had grown so accustomed to the "Wonder Boat," as Danny usually dubbed the up-to-date *Pathfinder,* that it had crept into their affections and seemed to be a part of themselves. Do you blame "Slim" Lindbergh for al-

ways referring to his ship and himself as "WE," when for hour after hour he had crouched in its tiny cockpit, watching his indicators, handling his speeding craft just as gingerly as an experienced jockey would a blooded race horse, and knowing that the "ship" would instantly respond to the slightest pressure of his finger? It is easy to understand how he came to look upon this faithful companion of his solitary passage over stormy seas as a veritable part of his own life. So it is with most bold mariners whether of the sea or air. The vessel that bears them safely onward, that answers every call made upon its ability to meet sudden dangers and overcome them, such tried and faithful companions of their lonely voyages through space they grow to love.

These two young fellows having been in the air-mail service for a number of years had grown to assume all the dauntless snap and vim that has come to distinguish the carriers of Uncle Sam's mail pouches. Storms could not hold them back from starting on their daily flight of hundreds of miles. Hail, rain or fog might be reported as lying in wait to obstruct them with barriers that would make visibility well nigh impossible. But at these things they only laughed, speeding into the lofty heights with a rush and a roar, gaily taking up the gage of battle with the aroused elements. These hardy souls had for their slogan the words that stood for so much: *"The Air-mail Flies!"*

So in a few years there has sprung into popular admiration a new class of "devil-dogs" that bids fair to equal the fighting marines in winning the hearts of all hero-worshipping Americans—the men of the air-mail service.

Just as soon as Amos started the motor so the transformed *Pathfinder,* now intended to serve as a seaplane, with pontoons in place of wheels for landing and taking off commenced to boom along over the quiet surface of the little harbor. Gradually her speed increased and before reaching the limit of the sheltered waters Amos had lifted his boat, which immediately commenced to spiral upwards like a thing of life.

Already Danny was as busy as a bee, observing the different gadgets and dials that dotted the black dashboard in front of him—the altimeter, earth-inductor compass, the R. F. M. indicator, bank and turn indicator, an angle-of-incidence reader and the oil gauge. Upon their ability to comprehend these instruments and others and pilot the speeding craft according to their reading depended their safety as well as the ultimate success of their voyage through the great spaces of the air.

Now they soared out above the limitless sea itself and met the full force of the strong wind. An unusually sharp gust lifted her savagely, but Amos by an instinctive manipulation of the ailerons corrected this irregularity and brought his ship once more on the level.

He tried every quality a modern plane might be expected to possess and in each case the result more than gratified both lads. They realized the better they knew the *Pathfinder* that never before had such wizard heavier-than-air flying boat been constructed. It was the ne plus ultra of the airplane builder's craftsmanship, a thing to impress a seasoned navigator as supreme.

Charging to such heights that they were glad to don warmer clothing, then making successive daring nose-dives until they hovered just above the mounting billows was all a succession of triumphs that filled the hearts of the two adventurers with exceeding great joy. Only in their dreams could they have imagined being in possession of such a reliable vessel as Mr. Carstairs had placed in their keeping, with all those amazing visions of exploring as yet unknown quarters of the globe filling his mind and soul.

Amos wisely decided that it was too rough to drop down in the midst of those foam-crested billows. Had there been an absolute necessity for taking chances he would not have hesitated, but right then, when on the brink of their start across the wide Pacific to the coast of Japan, it did not seem wise to thus imperil their vast undertaking just in order to see how well the seaplane could buffet the waves. If the time ever arrived when accepting such risks became necessary, neither of them would lose a second in dropping down, like a weary duck might have been expected

to do with the nose of the plane facing the wind and waves.

"That's enough, and a-plenty; we know where we stand."

Amos did not attempt to speak these words, for the roar of the engine exhausts must make it difficult, perhaps impossible, for Danny to catch a single syllable. At the time Danny was handling the boat and they were once more several thousand feet above the swelling sea. They had developed a system of dashing off a few words with a pencil on a handy pad of paper, which brief and condensed note would be thrust upon the one at that time handling the controls. A smile, a nod or negative shake of the head—signs such as these were used to indicate a reply, which could not be written while both hands remained busy with the pilot's duties, the joy-stick held tight between his knees and an educated foot moving the rudder.

Accordingly Danny banked sharply and started on the "home trail" for they were many miles out and the distant shore line could be seen but dimly. Up to the very end of the trip did the motor sing its regular hymn of praise, and Amos was absolutely satisfied there was nothing lacking in the shape of perfection connected with their dandy craft.

Danny brought her down upon the quiet waters of the little sheltered bay as softly as Amos himself could have done, and after getting the plane safely housed, with the assistance of several men

who chanced to be on the sands, the two happy care-free chaps made for their shack and dinner.

This being Sunday Danny "spread" himself in getting up a lovely meal to which both of the healthy lads did full justice. Then they lay around taking things easy, although every little while the restless one would step over to a sand dune close by, from the top of which he could plainly see the only cottage in the vicinity. Arrangements had been made with the telegraph company to relay any wire that might come for Amos Green by way of telephone, and Mr. Murray, who spent his summers in that two-story cottage by the sea, had gladly agreed to set a signal whenever such a message arrived with a call for the young pilot.

The sun was well down toward the western horizon and another day had almost slipped into the discard when suddenly Danny came running at top speed over to where Amos sat, doing a little job in connection with his daily logbook.

"Hot dog! the wire's come, Amos!" Danny was whooping as well as his lack of breath would permit. "They've stuck a red rag out of the upper window facing this way, same as we agreed on! Glory, hallelujah! but I'm glad this awful suspense is over, and we're going to hear the summons to duty once more. Hello, Japan! Nippon! don't you hear us calling you?"

CHAPTER VI

INSIDE THE GOLDEN GATE

Cool Amos looked decidedly pleased, for truth to tell he himself had been more than a little concerned regarding the delay in receiving the call to duty. As for Danny, he was fairly bubbling over with joy as together they hastened to reach the neighboring cottage.

"Hello! this is Amos Green talking. Give me the wire please!"

" 'All ready. Lose no time. You hop off tomorrow before night. Good luck to you both! Signed, Carstairs.' "

Amos had the operator repeat it so there could be no mistake. Then he hung up the receiver and turning to Danny gave it to him word for word.

"He'll be waiting for us early in the morning, as he told me before, Danny, so we can get busy and have everything done inside of a few hours."

"Then you figure on saying good-by to 'Frisco some time around four in the afternoon. Is that the program, Amos?" asked the other as they started back toward their little shore shack.

"Just about," Amos agreed; "for we figured we'll want to get above Honolulu before night comes along. The job we've got taking on our

cargo of gas is bound to be a ticklish one and we'll need plenty of daylight to see it through safely."

"Ought we clear out of here right after we've had some supper?" further inquired the navigator of the pair.

"No need of any hurry at this end, I reckon, Danny; though we'd have a bit of moonlight while on the way, for she doesn't drop out of sight until around half-past one to-night. It's going to take less than an hour to cover the distance to 'Frisco Harbor, once we start pegging along."

"Just as you say, old pard," agreed the other, full of confidence. "After we settle down there for the balance of the night we'll be able to snatch a few hours of sleep, eh, Amos?"

"Sure thing, Danny; we'll hunt up a quiet nook close to shore, throw out our anchor, place a riding-light, just as all sea craft must do, and then turn in."

Thereupon Danny Cooper sighed with contentment as though the outlook seemed pretty good to him. Action was his chief delight, and he always gave evidence of restlessness when forced by circumstances to "hold in his horses."

He hummed blithely as he rattled the tin pans while "scratching up" some "grub" to fortify them while on their little jaunt northward. As they had plenty of provisions left over, this "snack," as Danny persisted in calling the meal, was not lacking either as regarded quantity or quality. When he felt as happy as at present the

"chief cook and bottle washer" could get up a spread to equal any guide or camper Amos had ever run across, Danny having been born with a knack for concocting appetizing dishes, just as the French do, from fag-ends and next to nothing.

His tongue ran on as they sat there enjoying their last meal in the little shore shack. It pleased Danny to contemplate the queer opportunities that would await them for breaking their fast in the immediate days to come. Under many foreign skies it might be, if their plan for circling the globe in the briefest space of time ever recorded "panned out O. K." as he was wont to remark every so often.

"I've been giving my stomach due warnin', you see, Amos," he went on to remark with a chuckle, as if the very idea appealed to his keen sense of the humorous, "to be ready for the oddest lot of grub anybody could imagine—Japanese cooking, Russian ditto, French *table d'hôte* stuff, English and Irish with mixtures of several kinds taken in bargain lots. It's a good thing I've got a strong digestion, also an appetite that can't be dismayed even at baked dog in an Indian camp at feast-times. For I guess I enjoyed *that* rare dish as well as the half-starved braves that gorged themselves to the point of bursting."

Amos on his part was more concerned regarding the state of the weather.

"Clear as a bell overhead" he reported after taking a look outside, "and that wind dropped

low with the coming of sunset. We're going to have a nice smooth little run for our money tonight, Danny; and let's hope it stays that way for a couple of days, until we're well along past Hawaii."

"Call it five while about it, partner," spoke up the other. "I'd not make any kick if we didn't see a single cloud, have a drop of rain fall or meet up with a fog-bank all the way across the big pond."

"That would be fine, all right," laughed Amos, "but not at all likely to be our portion. The Pacific can be smooth as oil at times, and then again it's capable of showing things to even the stormy Atlantic. The shores of Japan and China, not to mention other sections further south where it runs into the China Sea, are the homes of terrific typhoons, beside which even our own West India hurricanes couldn't hold a candle for violence. But we'll hope for the best and that we'll be highly favored on this record-breaking smash."

First of all the pair of ex-air-mail aviators saw to it that a full hundred gallons of gasoline was put in the tanks from a couple of barrels that had been stored inside the rude hangar. Danny observed how carefully Amos drained the very last drop from the receptacles, which were afterwards broken into bits with an ax, and the heads and staves burned on the beach.

"What's all the necessity of doing this, I'd like

to know?'' Danny finally inquired, as they stood watching until every fragment of oak wood had been reduced to red ashes, which Amos stirred around with a stick and finally drenched with water.

''I promised not to leave a single drop of this New Discovery gas around for some curious spy to get hold of,'' he explained readily enough. ''I understand some unscrupulous rivals of the discoverer have been trying their level best to see his hand and beat him out. There may not be anybody keeping tab on us right now, but I'm taking no chances. Safety-first is a good rule to follow every way you can look at it.''

''Hot dog! I get the idea in my slow-moving brain-box, Amos, and I guess it'd be some job for the slickest of paid spies to find a single drop of juice around these diggings after *you* get through. Kind of adds to the thrill, this thing of having some sleuth watchin' us and meanin' to upset our Mr. Smith's calculations. They'll have to go further to lay hold of enough gas to have it analyzed so's to learn what he mixes with it to give such glorious results.''

After making certain they had forgotten nothing the two kindred souls were ready to sally forth for the take-off.

It was indeed a typical California night, as clear as a bell with the moon, now within a few days of being full, hanging up in the sky, and giving a silvery touch to all objects below, so that

with a pair of sharp eyes it was possible to see for some little distance though not with accuracy.

The boat was slipped down the greased wooden slope to the water, after which the pair embarked and settled themselves for their brief journey. It was a delight to their hearts to hear the sharp detonations that told of the motor at work with its marvelously true rhythm, for it had never once missed a stroke since they quitted Los Angeles where the jaunty craft had been fashioned. Flying all the way across the continent to New York, then to Paris and back, with a second transcontinental journey to follow—to the minds of Amos and his pal this constituted a service record that any motor builder could well be proud of.

Shortly afterwards they were heading north. Amos did not plan to go out over the sea for any distance since there was no necessity just then. Besides, he figured, they were likely to see as much of the ocean as any ambitious soul could wish once they "cut stick" and were off for keeps.

The trip up the coast proved uneventful and there was never a single hitch from start to finish. Danny kept making frequent use of the marine glasses he was so fond of handling, and which were adapted to night service as well as daytime use, an arrangement especially appreciated by voyagers of the upper spaces, accustomed to making swift passages through all the twenty-four hours, since "the air mail flies" despite all adversities of storm or temperature extremes.

So in due time he let Amos know he had sighted the Golden Gate, at which the pilot altered their course. Shortly afterwards the big *Pathfinder* settled down lower and lower, the pontoons kissed the surface of the water, skimmed free for a moment, then contact was renewed until the hydroplane was gliding safely over the little waves in San Francisco Harbor.

It was not the first time Amos had been on this sheet of water so he knew just what to do. Accordingly he taxied over to a spot close to the shore line, where finding it sufficiently shallow for his purpose, Danny was given the signal to drop over their little mud-hook.

CHAPTER VII

MAKING READY FOR THE HOP-OFF

"First leg over and soft as silk," exclaimed Danny Cooper, after the chattering motor had ceased to beat with its accustomed loud throb, and they were dangling there at the end of the anchor cable.

"Now for a few hours of sleep," Amos observed, apparently in no wise disturbed from his accustomed state of unruffled calm.

"With a busy day ahead of us in the bargain," Danny was saying, as he took pains to make sure their riding-light was in good order, so that no meddlesome boat might run them down when absolute darkness fell upon the harbor after the moon, even now trembling just above the western horizon should drop out of sight. When an airship takes on the cloak of a sea-going hydroplane it comes under the rules and regulations as determined by Government standards, of those vessels accustomed to ploughing water thoroughfares.

After that the pair snuggled down in their cramped quarters, and prepared to snatch what Danny persisted in calling "a cat-nap or two."

With the disappearance of the moon a pall of

darkness fell upon the quiet waters of the harbor except in the direction of the city, where a myriad lights served to lessen the gloom. Such old air pilots as Amos and Danny had long since learned the trick of adapting themselves to circumstances and were able to sleep under the most adverse conditions. Such is the force of habit and the control of will power over the body.

At peep of day they were awake and as soon as there was sufficient light proceeded to get their simple breakfast. Such things had long since been reduced to a science so there was no hitch or lost motion. Everything worked as systematically as though carried out by rule and measurement, and presently both were enjoying steaming cups of coffee, the kind that required only some hot water to bring out the full aroma of the powdered bean.

Danny must have secured his full "forty winks" of sleep for he was as chipper as possible. Why not, when the great day was at hand on which they expected to start on one of the grandest air voyages that had ever been conceived in mortal brain? If only Dame Fortune chose to smile favorably on their vast enterprise, might allow of their breaking another record, even if the world never learned of it.

When it was light enough Amos decided on just where they must again taxi, so that Mr. Carstairs might the more easily find them when he came along. All this had previously been arranged be-

tween them; Amos being such a great hand for making preparations ahead.

Accordingly they lifted their slight but effective anchor and changed their position. When they came to a halt later on it was much nearer the city, although still far enough away to keep out of the track of bustling ferries, tugs and all the moving craft of a lively harbor.

"Nothing to do but wait for the boss, eh, what, Amos?" ventured Danny, in as nonchalant a tone as he could possibly assume, just as though starting off on a six-thousand-mile jaunt without a single stop might be considered an everyday occurrence. Air-mail pilots have learned never to display surprise under any circumstances, taking everything as a matter of course.

"We'll find something to do about the ship, I reckon," came the answer, just as Danny expected. He knew that Amos never wasted a minute when on duty and was accustomed to going over the "furniture" of the cockpit and dashboard again and again, seeking some dial to adjust a trifle in order to secure a fraction better service.

So half an hour crept past, with both chums busying themselves in some fashion or other—rubbing with a wad of waste, making numerous tests, adjusting this or that dial a mere trifle with the idea of reaching perfection, then Danny broke the silence that had fallen upon them by exclaiming:

"Well, there's a red flag run up on a flagpole over by that squatty shed along the shore, Amos, which, like as not, means a signal from the boss." With which words he lifted the binoculars to his eyes and took a look, to add: "Sure as you live it's Mr. Carstairs, and he seems to be wavin' for us to get a move on so's to join him. Hot dog! things are workin' around close to sailin' time; time for us world-beaters to be up an' doin', eh, old pal?"

Secretly Danny was actually shivering with anticipation, nor could he be blamed for feeling a bit anxious when on the eve of such a tremendous undertaking. His companion on the other hand was as calm and collected as if it meant only taking his accustomed little four-hour run with those now discarded mail pouches that had so long been his regular daily task. That was Cool Amos Green's way.

So they again started the motor to buzzing merrily and taxied along the bay toward the spot where the red signal flag beckoned. As they drew near they discovered that all arrangements had been made by their promotor and director, the wonderful Mr. Carstairs, whose weakness, if indeed such it could be called, lay along the line of perfection of *details,* no matter how multitudinous,—laying out mighty campaigns with each minute action considered with exactness.

How he smiled and waved as they drew up at the end of the floating dock, where the boat could

be readily dragged out of the water to facilitate the loading. How eagerly did he clasp a hand of each of his dependable proteges and squeeze their digits most unmercifully. Mr. Carstairs was proud of his association with this precious pair of bold navigators. They seemed to occupy a place in his esteem that had long been waiting the advent of just such a loyal couple who would be so eminently fitted by nature to carry out the pet dreams of his later life.

"Mighty glad to see you both again," was his greeting; "and I only hope you are feeling in good shape for your big job."

"Fit as a fiddle, sir; that's for both of us," returned Amos, with one of his wonderful smiles that spoke even more eloquently than words could do.

"Fine!" breezed the gentleman, nodding delightedly. "Now, we shall likely stick right here for quite some hours, getting in shape for your start, with never the slightest thing neglected that can insure your safety and success, for I want you to understand that both are ever uppermost in my mind and heart while you are carrying on."

"Gas and stores are out here at this place, I assume, sir?" observed Amos, in his business-like way, although it was plain to be seen from the gleam in his eyes how pleased he felt to hear Mr. Carstairs speak as he did.

"About everything is on hand, I'm glad to say, Amos," came the reply. "These men are to help

put your load aboard; they know absolutely nothing as to what is actually in the wind, resting under the belief that it must be some sort of exploring trip up into the wilds of the Yukon country—looking up a new gold-bearing region; or some similar wildcat expedition. So we'll manage not to disillusion them by any incautious remark concerning Japan, or the other side of the world, which you hope to see before very long."

"Tight as a clam at low tide, sir, give you my word for it," Danny hastened to say, as though he somehow knew this hint for extra caution must be primarily meant for him, since it was absolutely out of the question for such a close-tongued chap as Amos to make a slip.

"Then we'll get to work without any further delay," said Mr. Carstairs briskly, as though one of the things he certainly did enjoy very much was preparing for a cruise.

It chanced that during the World War Mr. Carstairs, a Virginian with good English and French blood in his family away back during Colonial times, had offered his services to France in the cause of humanity, he being an experienced aviator and lover of the sport, despite the fact of his being a multi-millionaire. So when the war game was over and he had received a decoration from the French nation for his gallantry, he still loved to dabble in his beloved hobby, although debarred, through an injured hand from actually playing his old part of a plane pilot.

Then gripped with a longing to do his part at advancing the service of scientific aviation in the interest of humanity, he had by degrees conceived the stupendous idea of undertaking to equal, if not surpass, every bold flight of the world's most capable air pilots, backing each venture absolutely with his own private means, which he seemed ready to spend to a limitless extent so as to further the end in view.

It became a hobby, indeed an obsession, that possessed his mind day and night, and undoubtedly Mr. Carstairs was vastly enjoying the planning of further amazing schemes that would take his two charges to the uttermost ends of the known world, and even into places where white men had never before ventured.

Things were soon moving along steadily. First of all the necessary fuel had to be stowed away in the capacious gas tanks with which the *Pathfinder* had been fitted. Danny saw to this, watching with a jealous eye everything that was done. He noted with grim satisfaction how each drum on the dock bore the mysterious letters "F.P.G." which assured him that it contained fifty gallons of that wonderful New-Discovery gasoline that had been rendered almost entirely safe against the danger of premature explosion.

From numerous experiments Amos knew to a fraction just what sort of a load the plane could lift from the water or the land; also the difference between the two methods of getting off. Ac-

cordingly he was well aware how many hundred gallons of fuel might be taken aboard without passing the safety point. It required considerable clever figuring to arrive at these conclusions, but that was one of the strong points about Amos, reaching the limit without taking one step beyond the line.

While this was going on Mr. Carstairs drew Amos aside to where they could sit down and have a real heart-to-heart confab. There were many matters that ought to be discussed concerning the future, things connected with the possible keeping on from Japan so as to make a complete flight around the world in the shortest number of days, and leaving a record which, even if kept secret in Mr. Carstairs' possession, must remain a top-notch flight for many years to come.

Amos had jotted down a host of questions which he now propounded to the other in succession, every one being of more or less vital importance. His grasp of the subject seemed to give the gentleman great pleasure, for he kept casting side glances at his companion, with ever-increasing admiration in his sparkling eyes. Fortune, indeed, must surely have been smiling on his projects when he so opportunely ran across this duplicate of Lindbergh among the numerous air-mail pilots in the Government service.

CHAPTER VIII

"TOKIO—OR BUST!"

"HERE are some important papers I want to put in your hands, Amos!" Mr. Carstairs was saying later on, when Danny had announced the completion of putting aboard the last gallon of gasoline they figured on starting with, and the men had been dismissed after being paid off.

"I reckoned you'd have something of that sort to give me, sir," Amos told his benefactor and friend.

"First of all here are accurate charts following the line of travel you told me you expected to follow in case you received the right word from me along about the fourteenth or fifteenth of the month at Tokio. You will find this American party the guest of our consul at Yokohama when you arrive; and he will have made all necessary arrangements for the change from pontoons to wheels, so you may be equipped for your long flight over Asia and Europe, going back to pontoons again at Queenstown, Ireland."

"Yes, sir, I understand," observed Amos, "and I can see that you've fixed it with some responsible party in every city all the way along where we expect to land; a pretty big contract it must have been, too, for you."

Mr. Carstairs smiled as though pleased to hear Amos give him this implied compliment, for he had come to have a high opinion of this wide-awake young air pilot's judgment, but he only said indifferently:

"Well, you know nothing tickles me half so much as undertaking things that lots of people would call impossibilities. There's enough of the aviator spirit left in me for that, Amos. Now, here are several letters of credit, each for a thousand dollars, which you will have no difficulty in cashing, no matter in which foreign country you may find yourself landing. Besides, I have secured for each of you a passport, bearing your photographs, that I expect you will need many times in order to explain just who you are and smooth the way over ragged places. The various stamps upon them will prove you have been in those places on certain specified days."

Amos nodded.

"You seem not to have neglected a single thing, sir," he said, smilingly.

"I trust I have not, my boy," replied the gentleman, soberly. "This is no light undertaking you are assuming in my behalf, and I can surely well afford to lie awake a few nights conjuring up possibilities that must be insured against, in order to afford you every chance to win out; for a myriad of things may conspire to make your road a rocky one indeed. I am not quite through with making my arrangements,

although some of them are so well along the route that I shall have plenty of time to carry them out before you arrive at the station on your long journey.

"I expect you to send me word after you land on each and every occasion, never counting the cost of transmission of the wire, for I shall be anxious every hour of the two weeks you may be gone. You know how my thoughts will follow you day by day as I pore over my own duplicate chart and peg out your movements. Sometimes I begin to have my suspicions that I am asking you to undertake an unreasonable flight; but I have studied, and think I fully understand your ambitious nature, Amos, my lad, so that it is a great pleasure for me to be able to gratify that natural desire on the part of an air-mail pilot to accomplish worth while things along the line of his one great love."

"And on my part, Mr. Carstairs, you can imagine the joy that fills my heart over this wonderfully fine chance to carry out some of the dreams I've indulged in, especially after Slim Lindbergh broke into the lime-light with his superb solitary flight across to Paris."

"I trust everything is in apple-pie order aboard the *Pathfinder,* the instruments, motor and full equipment just as you yourself would have them beyond criticism, absolutely perfect. I could not think of letting you two boys make

this start today unless you can assure me of this important thing."

"I do not know how they could be bettered in the slightest degree, sir; and I have tried my hardest to discover even the slightest fault, but all in vain. Of course much depends on how successful we are going to be out there beyond Hawaii in making our transfer of gas while in motion; but I'm almost dead certain it can be easily done, especially since you have provided us with that safe type of fuel."

"You have tested it with the motor, I presume, Amos?"

"Twice, sir, the second time to convince Danny, who seemed to fancy it might be too good a snap to be true. On both occasions it worked like a charm, and I reckon the discoverer will give the whole world of gasoline users a big thrill when he decides to put this stuff on the market. Then we used nothing else in our last flight over the sea and in coming up here last night."

"No weaknesses cropped up, I hope, Amos, no perceptible slackening of power in your motor on account of this new fuel?"

"Not the slightest, sir; indeed, Danny, even before he knew that I had changed the gas in the tank, assured me the pace had never been *quite* so speedy; so you see that claim on the part of er—Mr. Smith, was fairly and squarely substan-

tiated. Make your mind easy on that score, Mr. Carstairs."

They talked for a long time after that, while Danny was busying himself about the plane examining the pontoon fastenings, the undergear that occupied such an essential part when a successful flight and landing was contemplated, and other portions of the *Pathfinder's* equipment.

Mr. Carstairs, after consulting a little list he carried, evidently lest in the excitement of the departure he forget some vital point, gave Amos other papers, with full directions concerning their use and necessity.

When noon came they had discussed the impending flight from every possible angle, Danny joining in during the latter part of the confab, and it really looked as though nothing more could be said on either side.

Amos, however, did not plan to get away before late in the afternoon, say at half-past four. He figured that with no slip-up in their calculations they would be close to Honolulu around the same hour on the following day, July twelfth, with plenty of time to put through the ticklish job of refueling before dusk came on.

The plane with the help of some men was accordingly dragged out of the water and housed in the low but secure hangar. This was the property of a flying club in San Francisco, some of whose members were at the time away in their hydroplane, making a flight down along the coast

in the interest of scientific research, and whose buildings Mr. Carstairs had been able to engage for that one particular day.

"After you leave," he told the two pals, "I'll see that every scrap of the new gasoline left over is dumped into the bay and the drums taken back where they came from. Some of those club members might be inclined to make investigations out of mere curiosity, and hit on a stunning fact that isn't meant for public attention just yet. But since we have your boat securely under lock and key I want you two to come along with me for a parting dinner. Never mind if you think you're hardly fixed in proper clothes, because I shall secure a private room at the hotel and we can chat to our hearts content."

"Give us a little time to get out of our dungarees, please," said Amos, "and wash up. It'll be something to look back at with keen pleasure, having dinner with you, sir, before we take off for good."

Danny chuckled and grinned, which told comprehensively how much he liked the immediate program. So presently they were off for the city in Mr. Carstairs' fine car, and it can be set down as certain they were served the most appetizing meal any airplane pilot's imagination and hunger could conjure up. Still, Amos had privately warned Danny to "go slow," for he knew the other's amazing appetite, and really it would be too bad to imperil the start of their great cruise

by reason of either one coming down with an attack of indigestion caused by unreasonable "stuffing."

Mr. Carstairs, who did the ordering, must also have entertained a similar thought, for he had put before them only that sort of meal such as could have no bad results as an aftermath, though everything was absolutely superb as hotel viands go.

They loitered long at the table and indulged in much conversation. Amos succeeded in coaxing their genial host to tell a few things concerning his experiences when in the air service "over there," first being connected with the Lafayette Escadrille, and then changing over to the American force when Uncle Sam got a portion of his men across the sea, baffling the desperate efforts of the enemy submarines to torpedo their craft.

Like many other veterans of the war Mr. Carstairs proved a bit shy about talking at length concerning what he had been through; he seemed to wish to forget those dreadful events that doubtless sometimes cropped up in his dreams, so that he again found himself engaged in a life and death struggle with a stubborn enemy airman far above the clouds, with one of the combatants due to go swirling down to earth and eternity.

As the afternoon was now wearing on they again set out for the hangar on the bay shore, where Mr. Carstairs, who neglected no point look-

ing to safety, had stationed a private watchman, with arms on his person, and orders to resist any attempt at breaking into the locked shed.

They found everything secure and presently the boat was launched. It now lacked but a few minutes of half past four and Danny was quivering with eagerness to be "on the jump." As for Amos, you would never know from his looks and cool actions that he was about to start on such a momentous and hazardous undertaking. It really quieted Danny's nerves just to note his calm demeanor, and the lack of the slightest tremor in his voice as they proceeded to take their places in the double cockpit.

There were a number of onlookers gathered to see the stranger's hydroplane take off, and after he had squeezed a hand of each of the boys and bidden them "*au revoir,* but not good-by," Mr. Carstairs bending forward, said to the grinning Danny Cooper:

"I take it for granted, Danny, lad, that you already have an appropriate slogan to cover the situation, and which you might nail at your masthead if you had one. Suppose you tell me what it is you've chosen?"

And Danny, placing his lips to the gentleman's ear, went on to hiss: "Sure thing, sir, and it's *'Tokio—or Bust!'*"

"Fine," laughed the pleased Mr. Carstairs; "only I hope there'll be no busting on this little joy ride for either of you!"

Amos was already pushing the stick forward causing the motor to get into action and the pontoons to start gliding through the water. Faster and faster they moved, with an accelerating burst of reports from the exhausts. Looking back as they left the water and headed directly west, Danny could see Mr. Carstairs waving his handkerchief. He bellowed back words that were of course drowned in the noise of the motor.

Then they were away, headed straight as the crow flies for Japan!

CHAPTER IX

HEADED FOR HONOLULU

By the time the sun was hovering just above the level line of the horizon the two daring adventurers had placed some two hundred miles between themselves and the California coast.

During this time things had kept working with clock-like regularity—nothing could have surpassed the steady throb of the motor, which thus far in all their experience had never missed a single stroke. Given sufficient lubrication, Amos confidently believed he could circle the globe without its going back on him once. It seemed incredible, but then there is the human heart. Consider how many myriad of constant throbs and pulsations it continues to give in a healthy man all the way up to seventy years of age. It seemed sometimes to Amos that the engine builders of today had finally succeeded in bringing forth such a dependable machine that it could be reckoned almost equal to the wonderful center of human life.

Soon night would settle down, and their long, monotonous vigil begin. Both of them were familiar with night flying. Indeed, for months at a time they had carried through their daily trips

after the sun had gone to rest, so that it had no terror for those hardy souls.

In such a well regulated machine their main duty would be to sit there and keep constant tab on the way this or that part carried out its particular function in taking the plane through limitless space. Indeed, truth to tell, their hardest work would be to keep from dropping into a doze—the worst crime any air pilot could commit, since immediate disaster was likely to follow swiftly in its train.

Amos had been scrupulously careful to set his exact course by means of the earth-inductor compass, so that they were moving in a direct line for the Hawaiian Islands. Unless something unexpected occurred they were bound to reach Honolulu eventually.

It was not so with earlier voyagers of the clouds, who had to figure out their bearings after the manner of nautical mariners, by taking observations with sextant and compass when the sun was in the zenith at high noon, and then figuring out both latitude and longitude by trigonometry.

It would be a poorly equipped plane indeed from that time on which did not carry this valuable assistant. Maitland, in his direct trip to the Hawaiian Islands in the big army plane, depended almost wholly on the earth-inductor compass to keep on his course, and straight as an arrow flies to the target was his remarkable passage. So, too, Commander Byrd and his companions held a true

course for the shores of France up to the time some accident befell their compass just when they needed it most, after plunging into a dense fog backed by a storm that covered the whole of France.

Danny's enthusiasm had died down perceptibly. Just as Amos knew would be the case his high spirits at the take-off were being followed by a more mature and grimly sensible view of matters; in other words he now realized the full nature of the monumental task they had voluntarily assumed, and realized the time for laughing lightheartedly had passed.

From now on it would be a grim struggle indeed, and one not to be entered into lightly. If they succeeded in carrying out their ambitious plan and reached their distant goal without once alighting either on land or water, it would mean they had broken the highest record for remaining in the air, which up to that time was held by an American aviator, and covered something over fifty-one hours, though later a Frenchman carried it up over fifty-two.

It had been arranged that they would spend that first night in short watches or tricks at the joy-stick, each taking two hours on and off duty. Long since both had grown fully accustomed to securing a certain measure of sleep when a pal was aboard to share the duties, so that there would be no novelty about such a proposition.

A novice would find it difficult if not impossible

to lose himself in sound slumber in the midst of all that steady clamor from working motor and whirling propeller. To one accustomed to this racket it was all in a day's work, and when it came his rest trick he could lose himself inside of five minutes; possibly realizing nothing up to the time his companion roused him for his relief period.

At such times as this it is customary to lay out a schedule for the carrying out of the work and adhering consistently to its regulations. Talking being utterly out of the question there was apt to be very little communication between Amos and his fellow voyager. When it became necessary to exchange ideas of importance it was done by means of a convenient pad of paper and a lead pencil.

As the one driving at the time could hardly be expected to make any reply, with both hands and eyes engaged in manifold duties, he was expected to indicate his acquiescence in or objection to the communication by a shake of his head or a nod, perhaps a smile or a frown.

So it can be easily seen that when two fellows are up in the air aboard a plane that is whizzing through space at the rate of perhaps two miles a minute, matters are apt to be slow so far as communication goes. Other things would prevent talking even if their voices could be raised above the noise so close to their ears, for after some hours of this clamor both would for the time being find themselves temporarily deaf!

So sank the sun, and by degrees all the light that remained came from the moon, which would cheer them in their westward plunge up to one-fifty-two in the morning, its setting time.

They had taken a light "snack" before then, although neither seemed particularly hungry after that glorious spread set before them by Mr. Carstairs to celebrate their hop-off on the long journey into the setting sun.

Amos was idling, and not feeling in a mood to try to secure some sleep fell into a reflective mood. His thoughts took up a subject that had often occupied his mind before then, the frightful roar of exhausts that made it impossible for a war plane to approach a city in the night without warning everybody of its coming long before it reached a position above the place to be bombed.

If the time ever came when that disturbance could be absolutely muffled, the life of an air pilot must be made a whole lot more comfortable, because in his mind, as well as in most others, that unmerciful racket was the bane of flying.

Well, why not, when hardly a week passed without some startling advance in the science of aviation being heralded in the news prints both abroad and throughout their own native land? He ran over in his mind the many discoveries that had come to light even within the last year, some of which had done so much to put flying on a safer basis. He followed Lindbergh in his lonely flight for those thirty-three hours of continuous speed-

ing at over a hundred miles an hour, and in fancy saw him landing there exactly as he had planned on Le Bourget Field at Paris, and in the most unconcerned voice imaginable, as though it were of minor importance, saying: "I'm Charles Lindbergh!" Would such a miracle have been believed only a few years back? Skepticism must have greeted such a story in the papers, even as it did those amazing prophecies from the pen of Jules Verne some decades ago.

Why, to come down to facts, or as Danny would say "brass tacks," were they not about to blaze the way to fresh experiments on this very same voyage, prove that it was possible to refuel a plane while in the air, and thus put themselves in a position to keep aloft an incredible time, up to the limit of human endurance? And again, if they succeeded in reaching Tokio alive would it not shatter the record for an endurance flight, even though their agreement with Mr. Carstairs must possibly prevent the world from ever knowing the real facts in the matter?

Slowly the night wore on, hour after hour, each one exactly like those that had gone before. When the friendly moon disappeared below the watery horizon, to leave them with only the brilliant stars overhead for company, it made not a particle of difference in their procedure. They were birds of passage, and night with all its blackness was to them almost the same as bright sunshine and high visibility.

Naturally they would be glad to see early dawn begin to show a silvery thread of light back there in the eastern heavens. Things are considerably more cheerful when one can look around, and see even the vast deep with its foam-capped rollers, its flying-fish, gulls, possibly albatross and other sea birds, even the spouting of that leviathan of the deep, the whale.

Danny's mind was full of all such things, for he continually dwelt on the wonders he would be likely to see if indeed their voyage proved successful, and the wire from Mr. Carstairs, received at Tokio, bade them continue on their western way until they once more turned up in San Francisco, having completely girdled the globe, perhaps in much the briefest time ever known. How he revelled in these brain fancies, founded on all he had lately read in books supplied by the libraries in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and other cities near which he and Amos had been quartered while awaiting their orders.

Thus morning came, to find them booming along, always keeping well above the century mark per hour, and several times when reaching out to the limit of their motive power, attaining the high mark of a hundred and thirty miles within sixty minutes, a record that filled both with admiration, plus renewed confidence.

Danny knew they had passed the halfway mark some time before they consumed their frugal little breakfast of sandwiches and hot coffee. The lat-

ter of course came from a vacuum bottle which had kept its temperature high. As the morning air at that height was quite sharp this warm drink did much to make them feel fairly comfortable.

But owing doubtless to their extreme concentration of nerves and mind on carrying through, they did not seem to have their accustomed appetites. Indeed, Danny displayed a lack of enthusiasm in dispatching his sandwich that might have alarmed his pal, only that Amos knew from personal experience how such a continual drain upon the nervous system was likely to cause Nature to look with aversion at taking stores aboard.

In another six hours or so they would know whether they had been keeping a true course or not. Should they be so unfortunate as to pass the Hawaiian Islands everything might be lost, since they could not keep afloat very many hours more with the last of their fuel dwindling away and the vast ocean lying ahead for thousands of miles, with no friendly shore in their path.

But Amos was not given to misgivings or worry, even if Danny allowed his mind to wrestle with the distasteful subject. Amos pinned his faith to the utmost on that newly invented compass which seemed to be working faithfully.

It was in one of Danny's off tricks, and he had been handling the fine binoculars with apparent satisfaction, spying out all manner of things that appealed to his enthusiastic nature. Danny had

done very little work along the coast, and consequently until recently had but a slim acquaintance with the vast heaving sea. Indeed, save for the two times he and Amos crossed the Atlantic he had never even passed ten miles from land in boat or plane.

Consequently he found a myriad things to engage his attention while they boomed along on their westward passage. As he turned from this to that, and "talked to himself under his breath," as he termed his holding inward communion with his thoughts, he presently discovered that he did not seem to be having as clear a vision as previously.

Thinking it was caused by his breathing on the lenses of his binoculars, he carefully wiped them with the soft rag, kept for that purpose, so that no unfortunate faint scratch might be given to the delicately ground glass. When he found that this made no visible improvement Danny aroused himself, and started looking away off toward the horizon ahead.

Something appeared to disturb him visibly, for he commenced dashing off a few words on the pad, after which he nudged his pal and passed his communication over to Amos. What he had written was brief but to the point.

"Turn controls over to me. Take glass and squint at the horizon dead ahead."

Amos nodded, and from his knowing look Danny

suspected that after all he was not surprising his chum, who doubtless had already seen and diagnosed the object thus pointed out to him.

But he did look long and earnestly, after which he in turn wrote, and once more took the joy-stick in his charge.

"Undoubtedly fog—saw it a bit back—we're going to crack up against some bad going, but it's all right, Danny; give you my word for that."

Danny looked a bit relieved; it always did make him see things in a brighter light when cheery and confident Amos took a rosy view of what had threatened to be some distressing happening. Nevertheless, they were likely to have an unpleasant experience before seeing clear skies again.

CHAPTER X

UNEXPECTED THINGS BEGIN TO HAPPEN

The plunge from sunlight into that dense opaque gloom was startling indeed. It seemed to change the whole aspect of things, and Danny put away his glasses, for they were not of the slightest use with that pea-soup atmosphere closing in all around them.

Presently it was only with extreme difficulty Danny could catch a faint glimpse of the tips of the two wings of the plane; proving that the Pacific fog could be of the same density as any encountered while off the fishing banks of New Foundland.

Danny had of late been reading a number of items in the papers connected with some wonderful "ray" that was able to pierce the densest darkness or fog-bank, and give the pilot almost as clear vision as in bright sunlight. How he wished that amazing invention were perfected and that the *Pathfinder* happened to be equipped with one of those fog-dispersers. But the time was not quite yet ripe enough for the coming of that delightful accessory that must cause all sea-going pilots, whether on steamer, tug, sailing ship or air craft to rejoice and consider the perils besetting their passage to have been cut in two.

Once Amos was inclined to climb to a higher altitude in order to find whether it might not be possible to get clear of that blinding fog. On second thought he concluded it would hardly pay, for they could not count on leaving the great fog bank which might reach up to the clouds, and they were doing well enough as it was.

If there came a chance Amos meant to make use of his new little radio set, and try to communicate with a passing steamer, from Japan it might be, or as seemed more probable, one leaving Honolulu early that morning. Up to then they had sighted only two vessels, and they were at a considerable distance, one being bound the same way as themselves while the other was headed almost due east. Amos naturally enough had not attempted to hail them by signal or otherwise, knowing that their voyage was intended to be a secret one, concerning which Mr. Carstairs did not mean the world to know more than could be helped.

Amos had told Danny of his hopes in this respect, so that both kept their ears strained in expectation of catching the sound of a hoarse whistle somewhere down in that sea of fog, announcing the passing of some steamer from the west. It might be suspected that hearing any such signal would be next to impossible, with their own motor and propeller giving out such raucous sounds, but Amos was not afraid of this; he knew how those deep-sounding bass notes can penetrate

the atmosphere to quite a surprising distance, just as the angry bellow of a bull will do.

Time passed and thus far they had heard not the slightest sound to indicate the near presence of any steamship. The plane was at times within a few feet of the surface of the sea; lower Amos did not dare go, lest a wingtip be caught by a combing billow and some untoward accident follow. He believed that forewarned was the best policy and brought no regrets in its train.

Nosing through the fog at a speed of more than a hundred miles an hour was an experience such as few pilots could boast of having come their way. It was unique in the fact that around them the blanket of mist stirred by their swift passage seemed to assume all manner of fantastic shapes, often of a nerve racking nature. This caused Danny, who was still "loafing," to grip the cowling of the cockpit and hold his breath, for it would seem as though some grotesque spirit of the air were reaching out a grisly hand to clutch the venturesome ship that dared cut through this dismal upper sea.

Then all at once Danny realized they were starting to mount to a higher altitude. Knowing his pal must have some reason for this, which thus far he himself had not grasped, he waited until the boat again sought a level keel at a thousand feet above the ocean waves, then he made signs to Amos, and poked a piece of paper alongside his pal.

When the other had read his communication he dashed off a reply, which a minute later Danny had read and digested.

"Boat coming—heard the fog whistle—getting stronger right along. Want you to take charge and let me try to get a rise."

Sure enough, the deep roar now began to reach Danny's hearing. He wondered why he had not caught it before when apparently Amos had. It piqued Danny, this coming in a poor second, when as a rule he caught distant sounds sooner than his chum.

"Hot dog! I must have a wad of wax in my ears, or else I'm deafened by that rotten exhaust more'n Amos is. But it's a *steamer,* just the same, and feeling its way through the fog-pack at that. Comin' this way, too, judgin' by the growin' sound—one of those Hawaiian boats like as not with holds stuffed full of thousands of cases of canned pineapples, or sugar it might be. No matter, just the same it's kind of nice to know we're close by other folks who have eyes and ears and appetites like us. Huh!"

In this fashion Danny communed with himself, finding some comfort in so doing. He was now handling the joy-stick and keeping the plane on a level; when the time arrived for Amos to try to open communication with the radio operator aboard the steamer he would make an agreed-upon signal with his hand, thus calling on the other to slow down. This would be to dim the

"infernal racket" and also to allow Amos more time in his endeavor to secure the information desired.

Now it appeared as though the passing vessel must be almost directly beneath them. The roar from that big whistle was thrilling as heard in all that dense, fog-filled atmosphere.

Up went the hand of Amos, and instantly Danny drew the stick back against his stomach, manipulating it so as to bring their progress down to less than half-speed.

Amos busied himself in calling:

"Hello! hello! down there. This is from a plane overhead. Will you be kind enough to give me our bearings?"

He repeated this three times before receiving any sort of reply. Then a voice was heard, breaking in between the hoarse bellows of that monster siren:

"Hold another minute and I can give you what you want. What plane is that? Out of Honolulu or the East? Answer."

But Amos had no intention of committing himself. Least of all was he willing to state the facts the official aboard the unknown steamer was so curious to know. Of course it was slightly discourteous of Amos, especially when they were so kind as to inform him concerning what he wished so ardently to know, but the circumstances did not allow of his publishing all the facts. So he kept asking for the latitude and longitude, as though

he had not caught the radio expert's request for information.

Finally the figures were given. The steamship officer repeated them in order to make doubly sure they were heard. Amos thanked him most heartily and then shut off, but for some little time he could catch an eager voice asking again and again who they were and whence bound. It seemed as though one very curious man aboard that boat was doomed to dense ignorance as to the identity of the person whose voice had come out of the fog-pack overhead so laden with mystery.

Danny had not heard what came up from below, but when he saw his pal hastily comparing the figures he had just jotted down with others taken a short time previously, he awaited the result with more or less anxiety. Of course as soon as Amos ceased communication with the steamer, Danny shoved the stick forward and resumed their former speed, so that but little precious time had been lost.

When he saw a broad smile illuminating the face of Amos he did not need to be told that there was nothing to fear, that the two tables of figures compared favorably, and that they had not deviated materially from the true course on which they started out—thanks to that admirable earth-inductor compass and a little plain common-sense on the part of both pilots.

After that things sank back to what they had been for some time before their meeting with the

east-bound steamer. They continued to beat their way through the pea-soup combination in a direct line, hoping continually that the fog would grow lighter and clear weather greet their sorely tried vision at any moment.

About this time Danny Cooper found a fresh source of anxiety commencing to grip him. It was in connection with the fog, of course. He had asked everybody he met who had been to Hawaii concerning the possibility of meeting with such a thing, and it seemed as though the universal opinion was heavily against anything partaking of the nature of a fog occurring over the Pacific Ocean between the California coast and the islands. Yet here they were groping their way through as fierce a proposition as one could ever meet, either among the valleys along the Western air-mail route or on the North Atlantic.

It looked as though there were times when old Dame Nature took a keen delight in reversing the usual order of things and surprising folks who were simple enough to trust to a silly rule. Danny grunted to himself many times as he considered these unnatural things, and his final conclusion took the form of deciding not to be surprised at any happening when threading these mysterious air routes of the western ocean, where things went by contraries.

What gave Danny the most concern, however, was the dreadful fear lest this bore of a fog persist far past all reason, that it continue to domi-

nate the sea after they had drawn near Hawaii, if there was any way in which they could know when that happy event came to pass when it was next to impossible for them to see the ends of their noses because of the pea-soup stuff in which they were enshrouded.

Worse even than that, how utterly impossible it would be for them to signal to the crew of the big De Haviland bus that was waiting there, loaded to capacity with their intended cargo of New Discovery gasoline, yes, and even though they were fortunate enough to open communication, how absurd to fancy the risky loading could be accomplished!

It was all very discouraging, nor could poor imaginative Danny be wholly blamed if he allowed his hopes to sink away down near zero, his sole dependence being the calm demeanor and persistent confidence of Amos, who always saw the bright side of the shield and never allowed himself to worry.

CHAPTER XI

THE AERIAL BOMBARDMENT

At least one condition which Danny had been told they would meet, should it ever be their good fortune to cross over to Hawaii, was that during the last half of the distance the prevailing winds would be steadily favorable, helping to waft them on their way. They had found this to be true for some hours, up to the time when they plunged into the fog, but since that time there had come a dead calm, as is usually the case under similar conditions of freak weather.

Knowing just how unpleasant it can be when "bucking" such penetrating dampness and swinging along at such speed, both of them had after their customary habit made preparations for resisting it. Waterproof jackets had been brought into service and the delicate instruments protected in some measure from the penetrating trickery of the enveloping vapor.

Considerably to the dismay of Danny something else occurred just about the time he was worrying over the possibility of the fog holding them off when the time was ripe for that attempted transfer of liquid fuel with their ship going at half speed.

It began to rain!

When the first big drop struck Danny a glancing blow in the face he refused to believe it could be possible and tried to deceive himself by stoutly affirming otherwise. It surely must only have been a drop of collected moisture, that had been coating the fusilage for an hour and more, being flung upward by a dip of the rushing plane, a mere false alarm that caused him to realize how nervous he was growing while held thus in the stubborn grip of the unwelcome fog-pack.

Then a second drop was dashed into his face with such force that it stung. Danny gritted his teeth, turned his face upward and on catching further evidence of the truth said a few things to himself not at all complimentary to the boasted calm and lovely weather of the Pacific at this summer season.

"What next? I want to know," was the burden of his disgusted comment. "Fog and rain in a bunch, when they said it *never* could happen over here around those beautiful Isles of the Blessed—particularly in July! Shucks! I'll learn in time that all countries are a heap alike. Out on a desert where they swear rain happens about once in five years, why down she comes in sheets when *you* strike that dusty section, regular waterspout in fact, and houses washed away! Oh! well, what's the use of kicking when it doesn't mend matters any? We said we expected to meet up with a lot of queer happenings on this little world-wide flight, and I reckon they've started right

away. You're not made of sugar or salt, Danny Cooper, so just take things as they come, grin and bear it like sensible Amos does."

Then a sudden burst of thunder smote his ears, preceded by an electric flash, at which Danny, with some show of humor, laughed and in a flippant way actually jeered at the elements.

"Go to it, all of you, and make it a pleasant welcome to Hawaii. Next in order it'll be a squall of wind strikin' us slap in the face; I c'n see Amos here is bendin' down to keep his eye closer on things so we won't take a barrel-roll that isn't meant to be. I kind of wish he'd make a try to get above this bully little storm, but he doesn't seem bent that way."

They could of course do nothing more to protect themselves against the rush of rain such as might be expected, following that warning peal of thunder. There was nothing in the shape of novelty about either the fog or the rain, since these former air-mail carriers of Uncle Sam had frequently found themselves encountering similar combinations when flying over the land. Conditions might seem different when out some two thousand miles from shore, with the mighty ocean stretching in almost limitless extent in every direction.

That first thunder-clap was soon followed by another of even greater intensity; the lightning, too, almost blinded them, and was somewhat ghastly with that fog bank enveloping them so closely.

Then came the rain. Danny thought he had seen water coming down in sheets before, but he was ready to give the palm to this sudden shower away off there in the Pacific. Only for their precautions they would have been speedily drenched to the skin; as it was they found some difficulty in keeping the flood out of the "baby-grand" cockpits as Danny sometimes affectionately described the confined space in which they squatted for hours and hours, getting all sorts of queer cricks and cramps in their doubled-up legs.

Since Amos had his hands full manipulating the joy-stick, rudder and various instruments that just then were in his special charge, it fell to Danny to fight the flood of driving rain that bombarded them with such fury. At least it was far from being cold at such a low altitude, so that even if wet through and through there was little chance for them to take a chill, which was one comfort, Danny decided.

"Keep going, old Jupiter Pluvius! Hit the line hard, and make an opening for the half back with the pigskin to dash through. Set 'em up in the other alley and let's have a real game. Whoop! what a clap that was! If a German Big Bertha could beat that for noise I'll eat my hat! Huh! at last Amos is liftin' her some; reckon he's got enough of this kind of *pacific* weather, and aims to get above the whole ugly business."

From the way Danny was carrying on it might appear as though his mood had "switched," and

that it now bordered on the reckless, devil-may-care stage consistent with the general make-up of his nature. Things could hardly be much worse unless the cockpits became flooded with the furious downpour, making it next to impossible for them to keep on their way.

Yes, the battered plane was poking her nose upwards now and quitting the near vicinity of the agitated surface of the sea, which, if utterly unseen, even when those dazzling lightning flashes lighted it occasionally, must present a most appalling picture with the wind blowing "great guns."

After all it proved hardly worth the effort, for when Amos by the most vigorous efforts had succeeded in lofting to a much higher level the conditions were no better; indeed, if anything, they seemed worse than ever, for another furious burst of rain descended on them, as though a long repressed flood had broken bounds and was bent on making up for lost time.

"Great Scott! what's this?" Danny next told himself, not audibly to be sure, because what with the racket made by the plane, the beating of the rain on the side of the fusilage, the roar of thunder and a few other noises he could never have heard himself speak though he bellowed at the top of his voice. "Something hit me on the coco right then, and I do believe it's turned to hail! Oh! well, that was about the only thing left for it to do for the sake of variety. Who cares?

Gimme me five cents worth of gingersnaps! Wow! that hurt, let me tell you. How do we know what they have up their sleeves off here in Hawaii? Mebbe hail-stones as big as hens' eggs! I don't mind some things but I do draw the line at havin' my poor brains knocked out by ice baseballs dropped down from the clouds.''

Fortunately it turned out less serious than he feared; the hail-stones beat a tattoo against the fusilage, which however was not heard by the two voyagers. Danny was greatly relieved when he found that the hail-stones were of only ordinary size, for he had a horrid feeling in the region of his heart as he pictured their wing structure torn and split into shreds, with most alarming consequences.

That impending peril, Danny always declared, came nearer to making his hair turn white than anything that thus far had ever happened to him. It meant ruin to all their carefully laid plans and possibly, even worse, a speedy end to their lives!

When they had left the hail storm behind them and even the rain began to sensibly diminish Danny felt much easier in his mind. Why, after all it was only another episode in the long list of such happenings. Amos had warned him that they were now bound for new scenes, where they must naturally expect to run across novel and unfamiliar experiences. And was it not fine the way in which Cool Amos had managed the ducking plane all through that stormy session, his firm

hand on the throttle and his judgment never once a trace out of the line of perfection?

"Bully for Amos!" was what Danny was saying to himself over and over, as they continued their steady rush through the fog-pack, headed straight for Hawaii.

CHAPTER XII

OUT OF THE FOG-PACK

"Now, if only the blamed fog would kick-off and disappear, everything might be lovely and the goose hang high!"

So Danny was telling himself after the rain had entirely ceased. The thunder continued to growl away down east, and they could still see an occasional strange illumination when the lightning flashed, backed by the hazy blanket that surrounded them, but it looked as though all that cause for anxiety was hull-down in the distance.

"Huh! and these are the nice, peaceful waters surrounding our wonderful Hawaiian Island territory, are they?" grunted Danny, as he prepared to take over the controls, Amos having given him the accustomed signal that he wished to be relieved. "Just the same I'm never going to take anybody's word again about this here weather business; it's sure to turn upside-down as soon as *we* hit the spot and kick up all sorts of tantrums. Huh! I'm bound to turn out a regular pessimist if things keep on twisting me up."

Their steady company, the "pesky fog" as Danny had come to term it in a vein of reproach and scorn, still held on, though Amos had cher-

ished hopes that it would vanish like smoke with the departing rain.

He did believe it was at least a shade lighter than at any previous time since their first introduction to the pall of gloom, which was a consolation for these sorely tried pals, endeavoring to accomplish a feat that had never as yet been attempted even by the most reckless of airmen.

Amos took a survey of the amount of gas still in the tanks, and was pleased to find, as he had anticipated, that they still had some two hundred gallons on hand, a nice lot, indeed, proving that his calculations had been most exact. So much for loading the plane up to its capacity in the way of lifting power, preparing themselves in that way for any eventuality, in case they passed by the Islands, owing to contrary winds, and drift.

As the minutes slipped past and it began to near the hour when they should sight land, Amos himself found it difficult to curb his impatience. So much depended on making no blunder in their calculations, such as would upset all their well laid plans, that it was not to be wondered at that Amos should feel some concern. Just the same he never betrayed the fact in look or manner, and Danny, seeing this, marveled at the imperturbable nature of this cool pal of his whom absolutely nothing seemed to "rattle."

Chancing to look up a little later, while Danny continued to run the boat, Amos gave a sigh of positive relief. Yes, the fog was commencing to

show evidences of being about to lift, for even then he could see that it had started to thin out, first up toward the roof, which was hidden from their sight, though presently the break would come ahead of the plane.

He pointed aloft as he relieved Danny, and it pleased him to see the quick response to the cheering sight, when Danny allowed one of those good old grins to spread across his freckled face. Although Amos could not catch a sound, still he felt certain Danny must be singing to himself, while his loyal heart beat faster than customary, such was the sudden shift from near-despair to fresh and abounding hope.

"Cool Amos' luck"—that would be Danny's way of giving vent to his feelings—for he did believe in such a gift of the gods, despite all his matter-of-fact chum could say against such a deduction. Did the old saying not run to the effect that it was "always darkest just before dawn?" and hadn't it been amply proved in this particular case?

The storm had ceased without doing them any damage, and now the fog was about due to fade away. In anticipation Danny was hugging himself as he contemplated the first glimpse of that Paradise of the Pacific, the volcanic Hawaiian Islands, set like so many gems in the midst of a wilderness of heaving sub-tropical waters.

Again he reached for the binoculars in hope that the powerful glasses might pierce the curtain

and allow him to see what lay beyond. In this expectation he was destined to meet with disappointment, for only a blank picture rewarded his utmost efforts, and disgusted, Danny stopped forcing his already badly strained sight.

Turning to other means for engaging his time he attended to several little but nevertheless essential duties, and amused himself in figuring out about how much gasoline they could take on without lessening the buoyancy of the plane. Amos of course had already decided on this to the gallon, and Danny only wished to see how his own figures corresponded with those of his comrade.

Again and again did he turn his eyes upward, and each time felt a quickening of his heart-beats as he found reason to believe the shroud was surely dissolving. At any minute now the sun was liable to break through, and Danny prepared to greet this happy event with much gusto and warm words.

"Welcome, old man!" he called out in his great delight, when a bright beam took him directly in the eye and made him blink. "Glad to see your smiling moniker again. Seems like an old friend come back to stay awhile. Make yourself at home, because we expect to need your light if everything goes well."

Shortly after that he saw Amos pointing ahead, and looking in that quarter Danny saw a picture he would never forget as long as he lived. The fog had suddenly separated and both sections

were being rapidly absorbed or driven swiftly away by a fresh breeze that came out of the West.

There lay the heaving sea, each particular billow crested with white spume and making a truly remarkable scene. Following along this vast panorama Danny discovered an island lying there basking in the westering sun's brilliant light—green trees, snow-white cottages, sandy beaches, business houses in the city of Honolulu itself, church-steeples and towers, in fact all the customary accompaniments of a civilized if exotic seaport. Back of this rose the lofty historic peak of old Mauna Loa, in whose deep crater red-hot lava continually boils and stews, as it threatens to overflow and devastate the rich territory, just as it has done from time to time for unknown centuries.

It was a wonderful spectacle, doubly thrilling to those two trail-blazers of the skies who had just emerged from a taste of perdition in the shape of fog and storm. Danny feasted his eyes to his heart's content, satisfied to believe he was being amply repaid in that ecstatic moment for all he had endured in the last few hours.

Already they were turning the nose of their faithful boat toward the blue sky overhead, it evidently being the prearranged design of Amos to pass over Honolulu at such a height that it would be difficult for even a powerful glass to distinguish any particular marks by which later on their craft might be identified.

Danny knew what his particular share of the arrangement consisted of at that time, and so he busied himself attaching a long, red streamer to the shrouds of the left wing, to serve as a signal.

Attaining the lofty altitude he had in view Amos choked the busy motor, reducing their speed to about half. He kept straight along as though meaning to pass directly over Honolulu and the lofty elevation beyond. Seeing this Danny experienced a thrill of expectancy, filled with joy to think how he would be given a chance to look directly down into the wide crater of the ancient volcano, the first live one he had ever seen.

They both drank it all in while passing over the city. Amos was of course deeply interested and secretly hoped to come that way again, when he could stop and investigate everything, including those enormous fields that stretched for miles, it seemed, and which he fancied were filled with Smooth Cayenne pineapple plants, for canning this delicious fruit he knew to be the chief industry of the volcanic islands.

But just then he was looking for something of a far different nature—something that had a most critical association with the successful carrying out of their ambitious scheme. He was hoping to see a big De Haviland boat start up from the aviation field of the Army Fliers' Club, situated not far from Pearl Harbor, and follow deliberately after them. That would signify the

set signal had been seen and that all was working according to plans and regulations.

When presently he glimpsed such a plane start off, and leaving the green field proceed in the same general direction as lay the *Pathfinder's* course, Amos drew a breath of positive happiness, believing that the smiles of Fortune were on them without a doubt.

All this had also been noted by the observant Danny, whose face shone with happiness. As the pursuing plane had by this time gotten fully into its stride and was chasing after them, Amos pushed the stick forward, increasing their pace until the wind shrieked like a devil's chorus through the quivering struts. Time was of the utmost importance to those sky travelers and Amos did not believe in "Loafing on the job"; let the army boat get busy, and show what it had in the way of speed.

While passing over Mauna Loa both boys managed to catch a hasty glimpse of the yawning crater, with its lazy steam creeping upwards in deceptive spirals, looking so innocent and deceptive, as though it had no intention of ever again breaking forth in terrible eruption. Somehow it reminded Amos of a sleeping monster that would awaken some day with a mighty roar, blowing out a new crater it might be and deluging the lovely valleys near by with streams of liquid, scorching, destroying lava.

Now they cleared the western extremity of the island, and could discern its sisters, some larger, others smaller, but pretty much alike in general appearance. The big Haviland was swooping after them as if eager to overtake the leading ship, but Amos had no intention of allowing such a thing, for he did not mean to start taking aboard the fresh cargo of fuel until far distant from the lofty peak. Some observer with a glass might be stationed there, curious enough to watch the unusual operation, and very likely send out an account of the novel method attempted, whereby a moving aircraft might refuel while aloft. The time had not yet come for the knowledge of this original means of replenishing the empty gas-tanks of a moving airship to become public property.

He tried for a still higher altitude, seeking to find a level where there was an utter absence of wind, for it was very essential that the two planes should conduct their novel experiment at such a time when the atmospheric conditions were most favorable, since their means of contact would really only consist of a stout wire bound rubber hose, backed by the skill of experienced pilots and their ability to manipulate their machines so that there must be the utmost co-operation, with the slightest possible deviation from a settled speed.

CHAPTER XIII

REFUELING WHILE ON THE WING

The critical time for trying out the great and novel experiment had arrived. Everything connected with their proposed trip around the world in what might prove to be the shortest number of days, depended on the success of this contemplated transfer of fresh, liquid fuel from one plane to another while both were in motion.

If indeed it proved successful, possibly before long such a feat would be a common occurrence and scarce worthy of mention, so rapidly do amazing advances occur along the line of modern aviation. They are a three days' wonder and then pass to the ordinary class. Such is *progress* in the eyes of wideawake and enterprising Americans of today.

Honolulu and lofty Mauna Loa lay full thirty miles astern and Amos was of the opinion that even the best of glasses would not be able to betray their strange actions to any watcher on the summit of the volcano. He was doubly convinced of this security from observation by the fact that a benevolent haze had settled down over the surface of the sea, and this was apt to screen their movements finely. It would seem as though Nature herself, after almost baffling their designs

with enshrouding fog and the squall, now veered around and was working overtime in their favor.

When Danny saw Amos nod in a certain fashion, as agreed upon between them, his heart started to beating like a trip-hammer. This signal was intended to let him know the time had finally arrived to bring the big De Haviland plane overhead and commence operations.

Meanwhile the other ship had been allowed almost to overtake them and was coming up with a mighty roar, steady as a rock and evidently "loaded to capacity" with the necessary gas reserve.

Accordingly Danny beckoned, waving his arm significantly for the other pilot to take his position just overhead. Amos had by now slackened the pace so that they were moving along evenly and in comparatively monotonous quiet.

Danny had seen the test applied to the new type of gas with remarkable results. He knew deep down in his heart that Amos felt absolutely sure no accident would come about causing an explosion; nevertheless he realized that his nerves were jumping unprecedentedly as the critical moment drew closer.

It was all right to try out the stuff when on the shore and it could not do any harm one way or the other, but this thing of taking it aboard in quantity while the two motors of the companion ships were working in unison, ah! that was a "horse of another color," Danny was telling him-

self. If anything did happen to upset all their fine calculations—well, at least no one of the two crews would ever know what befell them, their demise must come so speedily.

But this would never do, he must get a firm grip on these childish fears, since it was necessary he should have a steady hand while performing his part in the risky game. If anything did happen it must not come about through any fault in his manner of procedure.

After a little experimenting the big bus managed to settle into a position exactly above the *Pathfinder* so that they were now flying in unison, speed matched with speed. When presently the other experienced pilot had found his place the two machines were moving majestically along their course with such unanimity that it must have evoked cries of wonder and admiration had there been spectators. Indeed, had the ships been bound together by wire cables they could hardly have maintained their relative gait more uniformly. It was simply grand, Danny told himself, some of his fears already set at rest by the accomplishments of Amos, and the able pilot of the big De Haviland bus.

Only for the combined roar of the two exhausts it would have been a simple matter to have talked back and forth, and the task rendered much simpler in consequence. As it was they must depend on signals, in which most plane pilots and navigators are expert artists.

Everything now being ready Danny waved his hand three times, this being the signal to lower the hose.

He saw it starting to come down and stood ready to seize the nozzle and insert it in the opening of the first tank, having previously removed the screw-cap. This having been easily accomplished, Danny waited a full minute to determine whether the planes remained stable, and finding this out to his satisfaction he made two motions with his uplifted hand.

Although he could not hear the gurgling sound that undoubtedly followed, he realized that there had commenced to flow a steady stream of the liquid fuel seeking a lower level. Amos was watching the dial that would tell how their supply of gasoline was steadily increasing, although this duty was in reality left to his fellow voyager, his special job being to keep the plane moving with clock-like regularity.

Well, nothing untoward had happened, Danny was telling himself exultantly; and already he felt convinced that the experiment would prove a wonderful success. In that more comfortable state of mind his heart seemed to dislodge itself from his throat, where it seemed to him it had climbed, causing a choking sensation, extremely disagreeable. "Richard was himself again," which in Danny's particular case meant that he felt greatly relieved and almost ready to shout in triumph.

Still he must suppress himself, for the real business had as yet hardly begun and there was a deal of hard work yet to follow, also a constant risk entailed. He must keep on his guard and remember that when transferring any liquid fuel more or less explosive "eternal vigilance was the price of safety."

Amos was handling the plane with the skill that only a cool head and long experience could assure. To him that motor was a part of his own flesh and blood. Like Lindbergh, who first voiced that expressive word "we" as applied to the "*Spirit of St. Louis*" and himself, he knew and understood that modern type of motor to a fraction, and placed the utmost dependence on its ability to function hour after hour, without the slightest evidence of a defect, always depending on the watchful pilot to attend to all necessary details that were a part of his duty.

Gradually the tank was filling, Danny saw, as he kept his gaze fixed on the indicator before him, ready to wave his hand once when the limit was almost reached, in order that the observer above might shut off the flow of gasoline until the nozzle could be inserted into the opening of the second tank. This latter was now wholly empty, having been drained while the plucky adventurers were covering the twenty-four hundred miles which had been left astern since quitting San Francisco Bay the previous afternoon.

Danny had in secret practiced handling the end

of a hose pipe, shifting the same with a dextrous rapidity from one tank to the other, so he felt certain he had the motion "down to a dot" and that with care there could occur no kind of clumsy "foozle."

Up and up came the inflowing gas until it had reached the imaginary line Danny had set as the limit of safety. Accordingly he signaled for a temporary cessation of the flow until he could make a change.

That chap above proved himself absolutely capable for no sooner did Danny wave his hand than the flow ceased like magic, greatly to the satisfaction of the recipient "below decks." Had there been a delay in cutting off the supply Danny would have been powerless to prevent an overflow, with the result that the cockpit and fusilage must have been soaked and sudden peril overshadow the attached planes.

Waiting for a minute or so until all drainage must have ceased Danny made the change with accuracy and dispatch. Then and there he had an excellent lesson in the beauty of the rule of "preparedness" by which his efficient pal Amos governed all his actions. Only for his practicing this necessary transfer so assiduously he might have clumsily bungled with more or less unpleasant consequences. Yes, Danny was convinced that the motto of the Boy Scouts was a splendid one to make a life habit, and always when it was in any way possible "go prepared."

And now the precious fuel with which they expected to make the long flight across the balance of the Pacific to the islands of Nippon was flowing cheerily into their second big tank with everything going well.

The usual luck of Cool Amos again, Danny was telling himself. Why, when a case of real necessity arose even the elements conspired to lend that son of good fortune a helping hand. There was an utter lack of any stirring breeze, the sun still hung in the western heavens giving abundant light, and heart could not wish for more favorable conditions for making this important test that was likely to alter the plans of many ambitious scientific explorers in their extended flights to the far corners of the globe. After this fueling stations need not of necessity be located on the solid ground when it had been so completely proved that any quantity of gas could be taken aboard while in the air.

Once when on a fast train Danny had seen water for the engine taken up from a shallow metal tank that ran for a mile or so midway between the two rails, a scoop being lowered by the engineer, this being done to save precious minutes when the Limited was spinning along at almost a mile-a-minute. At the time this had struck him as a worth-while device, but it now sank into utter insignificance when he found himself cutting an important figure in the new method of refueling an up-to-date airplane while moving

majestically through the upper realms of space.

Meanwhile the second tank was filling steadily and surely. Danny only hoped the big De Haviland had brought a sufficient quantity with it to load the *Pathfinder* to its full capacity. But what folly to allow any doubt concerning this to creep into his brain and bring fresh cause for uneasiness. By this time he must have learned that their patron and backer, Mr. Carstairs, was another stickler for system and fore-handedness, believing that whatever was done should be done in a way that would place the accomplishment beyond criticism. Undoubtedly he had figured things out to a fraction, and allowed something extra for bad luck. That was the only way to handle these big undertakings, leaving as little to chance as was humanly possible.

And surely Danny heaved a sigh of contentment when the moment arrived for him to flirt his hand again as a signal that they had taken aboard their tank capacity and all was well!

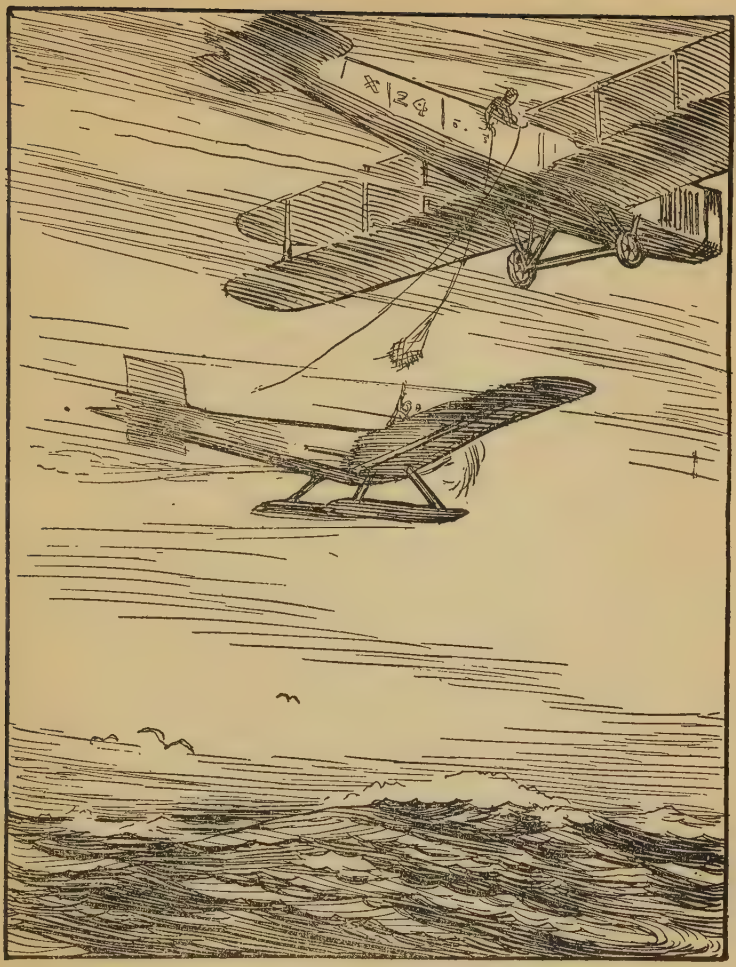
CHAPTER XIV

INTO THE MYSTERIOUS WEST

When Danny, having lifted the nozzle of that delightful little wired hose from the second fuel tank, watched it being drawn upward with a steady hand guiding its progress, he was about the happiest and most relieved chap possible to find in a week's search. Eagerly but judiciously did he screw on the metal cap, and how delightful it was to realize what a grand success the experiment had proved. Figuratively Danny took off his cap to Mr. Carstairs, that ex-wartime air pilot and bomber, in whose inventive brain this simple yet convincing scheme had originated.

But Amos had not yet given him the signal to tell those above their full duty had been accomplished. There was another little detail to be carried out before they could write finis to the thrilling tale.

Just as Amos already knew—from his close figuring and observation, which was so much a part and parcel of his every-day life—even with the tanks filled to capacity the wonderful ship could fly with considerable more weight. So following out cabled orders from Mr. Carstairs, the De Haviland carried quite a large number of five-gallon cans of the same new type of gas they had



Cans of gas were lowered by means of a rope with a snap at the end.

been using all through this epoch-making trans-Pacific flight.

These were now to be lowered by means of a rope with a snap at the end, so that Danny would have no difficulty in detaching each full tin and then releasing the carrier to those waiting hands aloft.

Of course there was no additional risk whatever, since the containers were all tightly closed. On this account Danny found no reason for anxiety; indeed, he was fairly bubbling over with joy because their continuance of this remarkable record non-stop run was assured in so far as a sufficiency of fuel went. From the way he talked to himself as he worked it would seem the odd circumstances connected with their refueling must have made him think of those ancient Israelites receiving precious manna from on high night after night; or perhaps he was thinking of the universal belief among sailors of the Seven Seas concerning a certain "little cherub sitting aloft and watching over poor Jack," sending down good fortune to his itching hand and protecting him from the fury of storm and wreck.

Down came the initial heavy can which Danny hastened to store in some niche not already occupied. As a few of the receptacles filled every bit of spare space in the "baby-grand" cockpits it soon became necessary for him to stow them away elsewhere.

It was intended to empty these surplus cans

as fast as there was room for their contents in the first tank; after which the tin containers could be thrown into the sea, making that much more space, lightening the ship and incidentally adding to their speed.

Working like a machine and never minding fatigue, Danny felt capable of keeping things going as long as the supply held out.

Amos on his part was counting every can that came aboard, and noting the figures he had written on a piece of paper fastened on the black dashboard in front of his eyes. When he found they had now come to that quantity which was the absolute limit of the plane's carrying capacity, he signaled to his pal to stop receiving, as they were "chock full," and could not add fifty additional pounds without overdoing things.

Danny fixed his eyes on the rope that was being drawn up, as though he would have given something for the privilege of retaining possession of that object as a continual reminder of one of the most thrilling and yet enjoyable episodes in his entire life; but of course that was out of the question.

To show how closely Amos had figured Danny knew they had taken several more of those heavy cans aboard than would have been possible or judicious, had they been on the ground and compelled to "lift" the heavily freighted plane from its contact with the earth.

It was with a feeling of pure and unadulterated

pleasure that Danny saw the benevolent big De Haviland slip behind, previous to banking sharply and starting back to Honolulu. He could only surmise the sort of fairy story Mr. Carstairs' reliable Hawaiian agent had given the two men, regarding the port to which the flying-ship was heading; but Danny was willing to wager a good deal that Japan had not been mentioned in the matter. Possibly it was only an endurance test, and the fast plane, after swinging around later on would head back to San Francisco, Los Angeles or San Diego, whichever airport she had left on her glorious non-stop flight.

So Danny only too gladly answered the waving hands he saw extended from the other boat just before the pilot made his half circle. He hoped that at some future time he might have the pleasure of crossing palms with that unknown knight of the joy-stick, for he was certainly a clever hand at keeping in steady formation. Danny was of the opinion he must have been an army pilot, accustomed to flying a hundred or two miles straight, along with a dozen other enlisted men, never once in all that long flight varying in the accustomed "wild-goose" formation front, with the leader in the van, and two diagonal lines running back, each ship a certain distance from those nearest.

Now that the very important business of replenishing their diminished supply of gas had been marked off the books, affairs could settle

down once more to a continuance of their former monotonous regularity. All they asked was to have their dependable motor make a classy record for its type that would likely stand unbroken for many a day.

And then Danny suddenly became conscious that he was exceedingly hungry. Perhaps this came from working over-time, the strain on his nervous system being now relieved. Then again it may have sprung from another cause, and one that was at least practical.

If at some time you are hungry without being aware of the fact, it will be forced upon your attention if you chance to see others busily engaged in stowing away food that gives forth a most tempting odor. So, too, if your throat is dry, should your ears catch the drip and gurgle of running water you suddenly wake up to the knowledge that your throat is loudly calling for relief.

Now it so happened that just previous to the lowering of that final can of gas there descended from above their "manna" in the shape of a gallon tin that was labeled "fresh spring water," also a mysterious package which Danny shrewdly surmised might contain some appetizingly cooked food, for he believed he got a positive whiff of fried chicken as he hurriedly laid it aside.

The temptation to investigate, while Amos so cheerfully retained the controls of the speeding ship in his hands, proved irresistible, so Danny lost no further time in guessing when the chance

to learn the actual reality lay so close to his hands.

The look of supreme delight that came into his face as he opened the packet and beheld the edible contents was sufficient to prove how he relished the idea of holding a little feast while *en route* to the island empire of Japan. Not being selfishly inclined Danny endeavored to coax his pal to hand over the joy-stick to him, while he partook of the unexpected feast, but his written appeal fell on dead ears, or rather in this case on eyes that refused to see it that way.

So Danny settled down to do his full duty while he watched the setting sun slowly vanish beyond the horizon, and mentally thanked the far distant Mr. Carstairs for this crowning act of friendly solicitude concerning their welfare. He certainly touched a tender spot when he thus catered to Danny Cooper's well known vigorous appetite. Surely no fellows could have run across so bountiful and thoughtful a provider and "good angel" as he and his pal, Amos Green, seemed to have done. They were certainly the luckiest fliers that ever handled a stick and cut enormous figure-eights across the skies.

It was still quite light when finally Danny had partaken of a hearty meal, the chief ingredient of which proved to be young chicken delicately fried by some Southern "mammy" he felt certain; though of course these Hawaiian women might have cookery attainments equal to those

of the Dixie blacks. He had thus far never met a native of Hawaii and consequently was not informed on their strong culinary points.

In his turn Amos also enjoyed a little "spread," so his thoughts must also have gone back to the fine sportsman known to them as Mr. Carstairs, the scientific backer of genuine effort at mastery of the air for the benefit of future generations.

After he had finished Amos reclined at his ease, the strain which had weighed so heavily on him having been relieved, since things were moving along so swimmingly, and the future loomed so auspiciously.

He looked out toward the still rosy-tinted western sky where sea and heavens seemed to meet in an encircling level line. How doubly mysterious it looked now that they had left behind them the Hawaiian Islands, that outpost of American sovereignty in the vast realms of the Pacific, with nothing of consequence beyond until there loomed up the far-off Philippines.

Somehow a feeling of peace came upon Amos, and for the first time within a week he began to experience a sensation of drowsiness overcoming his senses. The roar of the motor exhausts gradually grew less and less intensive until finally it could be likened to a steady drone; after which Amos knew nothing more until Danny touched him, and made signs that he wished to pass over the controls.

Amos somehow intuitively knew that the night

must be well advanced; a glance upward toward the moon and the star-decked heavens justified his suspicions even before he consulted the illuminated dial of his reliable little wrist watch. It was aften ten o'clock San Francisco time, which they were going by, and meant to hold to until a chance came to change to Tokio time, should their goal be attained in safety, if not, any sort of time would hold nothing of any particular value to them.

Danny had kept awake only with the greatest difficulty; he had purposely hung on far beyond his regulated "spell," so that Amos, who seemed to be slumbering so soundly, might enjoy a decent rest. Only too well did Danny know how his pal would willingly do as much for him.

CHAPTER XV

THE DAWN OF JULY THIRTEENTH

When later that same night, their second of the long flight, Amos woke Danny up, having stood an extra spell himself in return for what his unselfish pal had done, he pointed toward the south.

Danny, understanding that his attention was thus called to some sky picture, took note of a number of stars that he could not remember having ever noticed before. They seemed to be arranged in the form of a cross; this fact caught his attention almost immediately; and on the heels of this it flashed into his mind why Amos wished him to make the acquaintance of these heavenly luminaries.

"Hot dog! it must be the Southern Cross I've read so much about!" he told himself, with no little show of interest, for to Northern eyes the first glimpse of this constellation always gives more or less of a thrill.

So during his watch Danny frequently feasted his eyes on the novel spectacle. It happened that visibility was very fine during the entire night, and never before had the silvery stars seemed so close as Danny found them during those lonely hours while their ship was boring westward with undiminished speed.

He figured that they must have done considerable southing since leaving the far distant harbor of San Francisco; else they would not have been able to see this glorious spectacle, stranger to star-gazers of the North.

Later on he found that the gleaming cross had vanished entirely. Whether a haze had settled over the sea or it was time for the wonderful constellation to set, Danny could not decide. But then other nights were coming, when he might feast his eyes on the novel spectacle to his heart's content.

He had much to reflect upon during the next few hours of that splendid night. His thoughts naturally clustered about the amazing daring that impels young fellows like Amos and himself in these live days to start boldly off on air voyages that only a comparatively few years back would have been considered close on being the weird and impossible fancies of a mind given over to crazy and fantastic dreams. It was simply marvelous, this assurance that had taken possession of certain human souls, causing them to defy all the settled laws and regulations of nature, and carve out a passage through illimitable space with as much *sang-froid* as one would exhibit in stepping around a corner in his native city to purchase a packet of cigarettes.

Sometimes, when Danny got to thinking very seriously about all such things, he began to feel appalled at the magnitude of the undertaking upon

which he had ventured. In this particular case it seemed amazing—a "pipe dream" Danny called it—to consider that on the afternoon of July eleventh their aerial craft had rested easily in the shelter of San Francisco harbor; and yet, if all went well with their extraordinary plans on the morning of the fourteenth they expected to drop down on the waters of the Japanese harbor of Yeddo, the port of Yokohama, fully six thousand miles from their starting point, and most wonderful of all, without once touching land or sea!

With Amos it was different, for he never allowed his imagination to excite him. Perhaps it was because he had more or less of a phlegmatic nature; or else had long since learned to control his feelings and always believe things were bound to come out right.

That was one of the leading characteristics of the pioneer of American aces who made that first continuous flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris—"Slim" Lindbergh. He found it within his scope to crouch there in the little crowded cockpit of the *Spirit of St. Louis* for an entire day and night, with hours beyond, never taking his eyes off his dials and indicators, save to give this, that or the other a slight turn, or found it necessary to peer through his strange periscope, or observation tube, to discover what lay beyond in the empty void that surrounded him.

Amos had noticed that as fast as Danny emp-

tied the five-gallon tins he replaced them in the same spot they had occupied before. Since they had arranged to dispose of the useless cans by tossing them overboard when the fluid contents went into the large tank, he suspected his pal of having some fantastic scheme in mind, whereby he expected to make some use of those receptacles, possibly to his own enjoyment; for Danny still possessed a generous allotment of his former boyish love for fun, and whenever he went to a game of baseball proved himself a vociferous rooter of a fan, baiting the umpire and having a most riotous time of it altogether.

So Amos did not give the matter a second thought, beyond smiling at the strange fact that even while engaged on the greatest feat known to aviation, his chum's sense of humor could not be wholly quenched by the gravity of their undertaking. Danny and fun were synonymous terms in the minds of those who knew him best.

Both of the fliers were glad when daybreak came along. Amos had wakened of his own accord, and acted as though not so weary as might be expected. This proved how it was possible for a veteran pilot to secure a fair amount of refreshing sleep while his motor was thundering along with perfect rhythm and ceaseless vim.

Neither of them seemed particularly hungry that morning, which was perhaps hardly to be wondered at. When the human brain and body are subjected to a severe strain it naturally af-

fects the appetite. Indeed, after draining the last drop of coffee from their vacuum bottle, it seemed as though they did not care to partake of the fresh sandwiches which had been a part of the welcome packet of food sent aboard the boat after leaving the vicinity of Hawaii. Danny condescended to pick a thigh-bone of fried chicken that was left over from their feast of the previous evening, after offering it to Amos, only to receive a negative shake of the head. His manner however, was rather indifferent for such a big eater as Danny Cooper generally proved himself to be, as if when it came to the question of "to eat, or not to eat," he cared little.

Twenty-four hours more of this everlasting boring onward into space, and then they could rest a bit on solid ground. Danny had already commenced to find that limitless waste of water which could be seen far below, glistening in the early morning sun, something of a bore. He made up his mind that the dreadful monotony of a long air voyage over seas was not one he would again "hanker after." Give him the land, with its never ceasing changes of scenery—its grand mountains, wonderful valleys, the wide reaches of the plains, the cities, towns and hamlets that offered such a variegated field for imagination to work over-time in charming speculation.

He soon shook this feeling of despondency off and was himself once more and became a jolly, good-natured chap, looking at things through the

optimistic and philosophical eyes of his best pal, Amos.

"For a change, old scout, suppose we drop down closer to the water; I'm a bit soured on these cloud spaces up on this high level; and perhaps we'll see some interesting sights below, since we're getting further south all the while. Who knows but what we'll even glimpse a whale spoutin', which will please Little Danny a whole lot, eh, what?"

That was what Amos read when the paper was shoved at him, and he gave over the joy-stick to his mate. He grinned, and nodded, knowing that now the idea Danny had conceived in connection with those "empties" was coming to a head.

Accordingly Danny sent the plane in a series of nose-dives, that speedily brought them so close to the long rollers it seemed as though the pontoons might almost skim their crests, just then commencing to break into little foam-caps under the influence of the fresh morning wind.

At least it seemed a bit more lively down in these lower regions, where they could see the flying-fish leaping out, and after skipping from wave to wave to avoid some enemy, sink once more into the depths.

The secret of their flurries was disclosed when the fins of several big sharks could be seen cutting the water in eccentric circles, as though urged to unusual animation through a gripping hunger that demanded to be satisfied.

Danny managed to get glimpses of these things, although at the same time attending to his manifold duties as pilot. As for Amos he seemed to have had a sufficiency in the first few minutes after they leveled out and sped along just beyond the reach of any ambitious billow. He got out his logbook and was soon bringing it up to date with a stirring account of the remarkable things they had experienced some ten or fifteen leagues west of Hawaii, which doubtless was destined some day to go down in the history of aviation as an achievement of considerable note—refueling a voyaging plane in the air while it was making continuous headway.

How Mr. Carstairs would eagerly scan each and every word written down by Amos, who had shown himself to be not only a keen observer but capable of giving a clever account of everything he saw and heard. This ability proved that he possessed some of the best characteristics of an explorer-writer, who could interest others in what appealed so strongly to himself.

For several hours they kept this up, Danny hanging persistently to his new course, from which Amos shrewdly guessed he must have some scheme running through that clever brain of his, which would be disclosed when he was at liberty later on to use his hands as he wished.

Once he called Danny's attention to an object far off to leeward, and which looked like a small geyser up in Yellowstone Park, which Govern-

ment Reserve both of them had visited in company some two years before.

"Hot dog! that must be a whale spoutin'!"

Although Amos did not hear a single word of this he could read Danny's lips as the latter turned his head, with his customary grin decorating his freckled face and his eyes gleaming brightly. So Amos, who chanced to be using the binoculars just then, nodded affirmatively, and gave the other a chance to glimpse the leviathan of the deep at close quarters. Then he made a sign to indicate he would run the ship for a while, since the morning was passing away.

Sure enough, one of the first things Danny did upon finding himself free from responsibility was to start collecting the various "empties," and placing them conveniently at his right hand. Amos smiled understandingly for the "cat was out of the bag." The fun-loving Danny figured on finding some object on the surface of the sea at which he could hurl those useless cans, under the supposition that they were terrible *bombs,* with which he expected to blow up enemy ammunition dumps and batter fortifications to flinders.

CHAPTER XVI

DANNY HAS A RIOT OF FUN

It did not take the keen-eyed Danny long to discover some object ahead at which he could launch his initial "bomb." Had the tins been filled with nitroglycerine he could hardly have taken greater pains in timing the instant when that homely missile left his hand. Amos managed to get a fleeting glimpse of his pal just as he let fly and heard an indistinct sound as of boyish laughter instantly afterwards, telling the wonderful marksman must have registered a bull's-eye.

Whatever the object of his attention may have been it must have taken considerable alarm at being thus unexpectedly struck by some unknown species of enemy that could shoot through the air and come from above, just as though it were an eagle pouncing on its feathered prey or a fish-hawk intent on setting sharp claws in its intended finny dinner.

Danny would undoubtedly sit there and keep watch and ward as the minutes crept past, nor ready to call the game off until his resting spell had come to an end or he reached the last of his ammunition.

From time to time Amos, intent on other and

much more serious matters, was apt to feel rather than see that Danny had made another cast, and on each occasion he chuckled to himself over the way in which his light-hearted pal cast worry to the four winds and let the real burdens of responsibility rest on the only too willing shoulders of one who was better fitted for bearing them.

Evidently Danny was "getting a kick" out of his occupation, which would put him in better condition for meeting any fresh complications breaking out in the immediate future; which fact pleased Amos considerably.

While the navigator was thus "doing his stuff," as he himself would have termed his game, Amos contented himself in making calculations and admiring the ceaseless clatter of the wonderful motors. Those sharp and clear staccato notes were like sweet music in the enraptured ears of the ex-air-mail pilot. So long as they continued to talk in that regular, forceful manner, he was absolutely certain the magic power contained in that marvel of the engine-maker's latest and most marvelous triumph must be as good as when they rose from their starting place and commenced the long, weary grind.

For the more Amos saw of the working of the Whirlwind engine the higher his admiration mounted, so that by this time he admitted to himself he was almost at the point of worshipping it like a Hottentot does a fetish he looks upon as a little but mighty god.

Danny eventually found his great opportunity when he glimpsed a shark of some species basking on the top of the water. Perhaps the fish had gorged itself to the extent that necessitated a daytime nap, or else the warmth of Old Sol tempted it to take a sunbath.

All the terrible thrower of bombs cared to know was that the great fish offered a prime target, at which he could not help but take a shot. It was a favorite sport with Danny, and many a time when covering his mail route he had amused himself by perfecting his marksmanship in the gentle art of blowing up some pretended enemy.

It certainly required considerable skill in order to make a sure cast, for many things must be considered, such as the speed at which the plane was passing through the air, the distance the missile had to go before striking, and, if the object were in motion, as on the rolling billows, just what the combination called for.

On a previous occasion when he and Amos were testing the new *Pathfinder* over the mountains and valleys some fifty or more miles distant from their home port of San Diego, they had sighted a monster grizzly bear that absolutely refused to turn tail and scuttle away with such a noisy bird sailing immediately overhead, but when Danny released his "bomb" which struck with a clatter alongside Old Eph, he wakened to the situation and made haste to decamp.

History was pleased to repeat itself on the pres-

ent occasion, only this time the empty can actually struck the sleeping sea tiger with a force that brought a sudden splurge, a welter of foam, and down went Mr. Shark to safer depths where these annoying "mosquitoes" could not disturb his slumbers.

That closed the morning's entertainment, for it chanced to be Danny's last offensive weapon; but afforded him more amusement than all the others combined. More than a few times Amos caught him grinning as though his recollection of that hasty departure of the sea monster was a relish indeed, and a source for congratulation on the part of any ambitious aerial bomber.

One thing which afforded Amos more or less satisfaction was the fact that although they had now been continuously in motion for some thirty-one hours, and in all that long time there had not been a single "miss" on the part of their motor, he figured they were making a bit faster time than on any previous occasion.

When he had proved this to a certainty Amos had no difficulty in deciding how it came about; the engine having already covered many thousands of miles—in its passage to Paris and back, spanning the continent between New York and the West Coast on two different occasions and now this steady grind for days and nights—was in the condition that can be attained only after a motor has worn off all the newness and reached a point of perfection.

Then again since so much of their fuel supply had already been consumed, the ship was lightened just that much, a reduction of between twenty-five and thirty pounds for every five gallons of gasoline disposed of. And up to a certain point this increase of speed would continue to mount as more hours were checked off in the overseas run.

It was when Danny again was running the plane that Amos, in idly scanning the horizon ahead with the glasses, made a little but important discovery. At first he supposed it might only be a tiny cloud reaching up above the level of the water, but observing how very clear the sky happened to be just then, he soon doubted whether this were the true explanation.

Then it must be smoke he saw drifting off on the wind, and if smoke then a steamer was about to "cross their bows," in nautical language.

Amos did not immediately communicate with his comrade, preferring to let Danny study his instruments. At noon he planned to make use of his little aerial sextant and take an observation, so as to settle definitely whether their earth-inductor compass was doing its duty accurately, and keeping them directly in the course set by Amos at the start, giving due warning if at any time they shifted either to one side or the other.

After some little time Amos was easily able, by means of the powerful lens of the French built binoculars, to make out that it was in fact an on-

coming steamer. He continued to gaze until it was about time to make the accustomed change, with Danny given his liberty to go about taking his observation.

Before making the transfer of control, however, Amos pointed ahead, so that when the other took the glasses he could in turn see the approaching vessel bound for San Francisco, Portland or Vancouver, it mattered little to them which port it might be.

Already Amos had decided this was a Japanese steamship, for he felt certain he had caught a fleeting glimpse of the national Japanese flag at the stern, when a puff of wind caused the bunting to flap around broadside on.

Danny became absorbed in his new task of observing the stranger vessel; he had grown so sick and tired staring at the dreadful monotony of sky and sea, nothing else north, south, east or west, that even this little break in the eternal sameness was something to be grateful for.

Gradually the *Pathfinder* was mounting toward a higher level, although some time before they had ascended several thousand feet, glad to leave the near vicinity of those never-ceasing rollers. Evidently it was reckoned good policy by Amos to be coasting at such an extreme height when the steamer passed below, that those on board might not be able to identify the air craft by any peculiarity, such as would be apt to set those wide-awake newspaper scouts to smelling something

very mysterious apparently going on in aviation circles, something which thus far had been kept beyond their ken, and which if only unearthed would prove the greatest kind of a "scoop" for the lucky discoverer.

It was a pretty sight when the trans-Pacific steamer had attained a point directly underneath the plane. Danny focussing upon the length of the deck could make out a number of groups of what seemed like mere ants, but which he knew must be the passengers. All of them must be intensely excited over seeing an airplane in this remote section of the great ocean where such sights were most uncommon, in fact never before seen.

"Let 'em stare," Danny muttered to himself, in apparent derision; "and stick up all sorts of fairy stories about the mysterious plane noticed by those aboard the *Fujiyama Maru* or some such Jap steamer, on its last trip across from Nippon —all crates look alike when a mile or two up among the clouds, and they never will find out who and what we are. But just to think that same ship'll be dockin' in a few days somewhere over in God's own country, which is good old America, home of the free, a land that grows more and more dear the further a fellow gets away from her shores. Sometimes I almost wish I was back there again, givin' my dinner order in old Joe Ketchum's Hot Dog Emporium, and with not a worry or a care in my whole system. But then that's not Glory, which is what we're reachin' out for in

this here little jaunt around the terrestrial ball."

When the steamer began to grow dim astern Danny put by his glasses, and started to get ready making use of his baby sextant, built especially for the scant quarters of an airplane's cockpit. Amos would hold the speeding ship as steady as possible while the reading they coveted was being obtained at exactly the minute the sun had reached its meridian, and then when the navigator had done some figuring he would be ready to announce the result.

Amos felt but a mild interest in the matter; he could not show any particular avidity since he placed the utmost confidence on the reliability of their new compass that would notify them if ever they started a drift away from the true course.

Ten minutes or so later on, when Danny, having written some figures on his pad, passed the paper over to his pal, the latter relinquished the controls in his favor, and commenced to examine such deductions as had been compiled by his navigator. Then he studied the compass, and his marking of their full course, after which he smiled and nodded, for they corresponded to a fraction, showing what a model of accuracy that almost human compass must be. This was apt to prove the last use made of Danny's beloved sextant, on this trip at any rate, because they had high hopes of dropping into Yeddo Harbor hours before another noon came along.

CHAPTER XVII

ON THE LAST LEG OF THE FLIGHT

It was now two o'clock, according to the wrist-watch each carried; and the sun had made a brave start down the western heavens. Two o'clock, but it bothered Danny more than a little to say with confidence just what time it really might be.

Sitting there he busied himself in trying to decide this much mooted puzzle; for, according to what he had always read there was a day gained or lost in making a continuous trip around the world, if one persisted in keeping his watch set as at the start, and according to whether he sailed east or west.

Yes, it had been wise of Amos, to decide in the beginning how they should keep changing their time at each and every stopping-place, if after all they *did* circumnavigate the globe, as their plans contemplated; and Mr. Carstairs had succeeded in making all those wonderful forehand arrangements for them.

In the end Danny, being unable to decide just what the real hour might be, cut the Gordian knot by asking his mate, by means of pencil and pad, what the time was in Tokio. He knew Amos had noted the differences before the great hop-off.

When it was put in his hand Danny with a wide

grin pushed back the hands of his watch until they corresponded with the time given. Then he wagged his head, as though believing since he had "chased the devil around the post" that bewildering question would not give further cause for racking his brains.

"This thing of being prepared is a great stunt, I'd have the world know," was his triumphant way of expressing his feelings. "I'm going to make it a regular practice after this to push my watch ahead to the next station right along. Why, makes me sorter feel like I was already one-leg over in this same old Tokio, to be carryin' Japanese time! Huh! bully for Amos, who never likes to be caught with loose ends. On that little map, with our stations all marked, he's got the time laid out right along."

Somehow the idea took such a firm grip on Danny that before long he started to sniff the air, and got a real thrill in return. Actually he forced himself to believe there was something different in the very odor of the atmosphere, a real Oriental scent in fact, although to Amos, as they rushed along their way, now only a few hundred feet above the surface of the great sea, the scent *he* got was in no wise different from what could be had anywhere along the California coast, the tang of salt-water being much the same to him regardless of his station on the world's face.

Imagination is pretty strong with some people, and Danny had more than his share. Besides,

with the knowledge that every time he took a glance at his watch he was looking at Tokio time, there was at least some excuse for his allowing these feelings to have dominion over him.

Next he was figuring out just about how much more time was to be covered ere they could expect to find themselves in that wonderful harbor of Yeddo, with Yokohama at their elbow, and the snow-crowned cap of the sacred volcano, Fujiyama, rearing its peak just beyond. Why, so often had he been mentally picturing the inspiring scene that Danny could not shut his eyes without being haunted by its glamour.

Except for a few hours on French soil, Danny had never set foot in foreign fields, not even in Mexico, so this glittering prospect of seeing such a vast extent of the world filled him with mingled eagerness and awe.

He was looking forward with anxiety now to having a short time ashore, to work those miserable cramps out of his poor legs that, at times, seemed to be so warped he feared he would never again stand erect. It made him feel as though he had jumped from twenty-five years up to, say sixty, and once Amos discovered him slyly looking in a tiny pocket mirror as if to assure himself his hair had not begun to show threads of silver under the protracted strain.

But on the whole Danny proved himself a "good scout," and after these little spasms of doubt and fear he always jeered at himself for

showing a "yellow streak," and asked superciliously if he'd enjoy bearing the name of "quitter."

Well, after all there was consolation in knowing that everything, good or bad, must have an end. If they did not meet with some dire calamity and find their finish beneath those waves that swung along so lazily down there inside of something like sixteen hours they would be safely floating on the sheltered bay of Yeddo with their great flight across the Pacific just a figment of a dream, something to put behind them as the future with its alluring adventures began to unroll before their mental vision.

Of course Danny did not forget there were still many chances for an accident to overtake them, suddenly as lightning from a clear sky. There always is this possibility hanging over the heads of sky travelers, who risk their lives in defying the elements when plowing the limitless spaces between the drifting clouds and the face of the earth.

But Danny had firm faith to believe his pal was a prime favorite with Lady Luck, since the Dame of Chance always seemed to look on him with especial favor, and because of having such happy contact the feat they were so boldly tackling would prove successful. A partnership with Good Fortune is worth more than words can tell, Danny was convinced, when it comes to being pulled out of tight places. The Cooper lad was a firm be-

liever in that well-worn adage "it is better to be born lucky than rich."

They were by this time making sad inroads on both the water supply and the little store of "grub." Danny more than ever was thanking the thoughtful Mr. Carstairs for sending that extra gallon of spring water to them, besides the appetizing fried chicken flanked by a neat pile of ham sandwiches. But for that happy gift they would probably be without means of quenching their thirst or gratifying their desire for food. Apparently they had underestimated their necessities in an extended run of something like fifty-five consecutive hours with an additional six or more by following the sun as he journeyed westward.

There is always a certain amount of satisfaction in an attempt to perform an unusually severe task in knowing the crest has been passed and the sledding downhill is well under way. They had by this time covered something like forty-six hours of steady gruelling progress. That meant more than three-fourths of the trip had been completed, Danny suddenly realized, and it made his heart grow light.

Would they be able to finish their gigantic task? Was the human frame capable of standing such a long-drawn-out battle with fatigue and muscular cramps? With ordinary men the answer must be in the negative, but it was different in their particular case. They had been flying in the air-mail

service for some years, and familiarity with all sorts of discomforts,—long hours when storm-bound or held up by accident in inaccessible mountain passes—while deemed unpleasant at the time, had combined to toughen their bodies and give them the conviction that a seasoned aviator is a superman to be daunted by nothing in the long calendar of possible adverse contingencies.

That was a fine state of mind to be in, and it helped wonderfully to carry them through times of strain and fog. If men were to be picked for some particularly strenuous duty entailing a necessity for stamina, courage and cheerfulness in face of baffling difficulties, surely those chaps of the air-mail must be placed in the van of those capable of filling the bill.

Another hour had dragged along. It was now three on the afternoon of July thirteenth, and so far all was well. The gas supply was above their estimated requirements, the motor working like a charm, the plane answering pliantly to every wish or whim of the one handling the controls; indeed, everything was going as "merry as wedding bells," Danny whispered to himself.

There was one little shadow that still continued to bother the Cooper lad, "a fly in the ointment" he called it. How about those terrible typhoons that ruled the sea off the Chinese and Japanese coasts? Danny had read several accounts of those matchless and mighty gales and always with a shiver of apprehension.

Springing up at certain seasons of the year in the hot belts along the line of the Equator in those tropical seas, they had been known to ravage the coast of Japan with giant waves and mighty winds that tore houses to bits as though made of fragile cardboard. Ships were their playthings, at times lifted clear from the water to be cast far up on the land. Nothing could stand before the violence of the typhoon. The so-called West India hurricanes were not to be mentioned in the same breath, Danny remembered reading.

If there was one wish residing in his heart it was that they might be spared contact with a real typhoon. Danny was quite content to let his knowledge of these "twisters" be entirely theoretical, not practical; he had not the least desire to experience a close acquaintance with any such terror, above which no aviator could hope to lift his delicate air craft, so he understood.

He was of the impression that the real season for breeding these frightful storms had not yet arrived; since they were usually at their worst around the time of the fall equinox, but then there were occasions when the order seemed reversed so that mariners must keep on the external lookout whenever they found themselves approaching the region frequented by the Oriental terror.

Thirteen hours more, each of them consisting of a full sixty long-drawn-out minutes, which when added up made a staggering total. Really Danny had never before realized how many things were

liable to happen while some eight hundred minutes ticked along; it began to assume gigantic proportions in his eyes and he sighed on realizing that the time for shouting was yet a long way off.

It seemed to give him considerable satisfaction to know that once they put their feet on firm land again there would never be a time when these same fears would arise to oppress his spirit. No matter what country they flew over, if they chose they could find some sort of landing-place; and besides this there would hardly be any danger of starving to death, should they be held up by some accident to their ship.

When it came about that his time-piece announced the completion of a second full day and night since leaving San Francisco harbor, four o'clock, Danny was saying wistfully to himself, seeing that he could not lift his voice enough to make Amos hear: "Four-fifths over and far along on the home stretch! Bully for us and all credit to that jolly little Whirlwind engine, the like of which couldn't be found if you searched every land under the sun. Get a grip on yourself, Danny Cooper, and grit your teeth *hard,* for the agony will soon be over, boy!"

CHAPTER XVIII

NIGHTFALL AGAIN

It is doubtful whether Danny Cooper ever watched the sun drawing near the horizon with a keener relish than he did on that particular afternoon, July thirteenth 1927; it seemed to fascinate him.

Amos had been taking his trick at the stick, and just then handed over the control to his mate, as though seized with a sudden determination. Seeing him writing on his pad of paper Danny began to wonder what was in the wind; nor was he long kept in suspense.

When he had been given a chance to scrutinize the crude missive Amos had so hurriedly dashed off, Danny grinned comprehendingly, and wagged that sagacious head of his, as though to say in a wordless fashion:

"Huh! could have guessed as much, old scout; and I'm right with you O. K."

Here is what the pilot of the *Pathfinder* had written, the most lengthy communication that had passed between the two since quitting San Francisco Harbor:

"I've seen a great light, Danny—about that cockpit telephone business you know I seemed to dislike so much. Just got to come to it, like most

of the bunch; and I reckon in time I'll get used to having that fresh lot of harness rigged up around my neck. This writing notes is a whole lot *too slow,* and a waste of time. Fortunately we brought the stuff along with us, all but a small battery, and can rig it up after we land in Tokio. A little practice will give us the hang of the thing; and from now on we'll be able to chin just as often as we want to, never minding the buzz of the propeller, and the roar of our motor exhausts. I was a *gump* to hold out so long, Danny, and I'm asking your pardon for making things so hard for you. But I'm human, you know, and a bit mulish in my nature; but after realizing I'm in wrong I'm ready to own up, and try to remedy things. Does this suit you, old pal?"

Evidently it certainly did, to judge from that expansive grin, and the violent nodding of Danny's head. Truth to tell he had been anticipating just such a sudden change of opinion for some little time, realizing how awkward it had proved to be scribbling notes and handing them back and forth, with a constant change of piloting in the bargain.

He knew Amos Green, none better, and was aware of the few peculiarities in his sterling make-up. Set in his ways up to a certain point, Amos could hold on grimly until convinced he was on the wrong tack; when he was apt to change around in a hurry, and confess his shortcomings in the frankest sort of fashion.

Danny himself had had no experience with the handy little telephone used by many expert pilots who traveled with an observer or navigator, but he had always heard the contraption warmly praised, and could not understand just why his chum had taken so violent an aversion to the trick.

With the ear-pieces or receivers built in the helmet, and the mouthpiece suspended by a strap just below the chin, it required but a slight lowering of the mouth to talk directly to a pal in the other cockpit, separated as they were by the second small glass wind-shield.

If any emergency arose, as it was now they were prevented from communicating with one another, and this fault was apt to tell heavily against their ready action in concert.

Having thus freed his conscience from a weight that must have been troubling him severely of late, Amos appeared to "chirk up," and act as if relieved of a disagreeable load. Danny, too, felt considerably better, realizing that in future traveling they would not be put to such difficult straits in order just to say "hello! there, how are things going on up front?"

Now the sun hung suspended like a great golden ball, ready to take its daily plunge behind the western horizon. Thus another day would have been "knocked into the discard," as Danny put it in his own peculiar vernacular, which consisted of a mixture of current slang, quaint bits of philosophy, a touch of humor and all sorts of

"frills" that became one of his exuberant nature.

He was thinking how easy and natural it must be to talk with his mate through means of the miniature phone, for he did considerable chattering, nodding, and grinning, as though being in animated consultation with Amos over urgent matters on which they slightly disagreed.

By this time their long continuous and far from pleasant crouching in the confined quarters of the tiny cockpits was commencing to be decidedly irksome to both fliers. Danny, remembering the customary "everybody stand" of the supposed-to-be fateful seventh inning of a ball game, decided he must try its efficiency while daylight still remained. The ship was moving on its swift way on a level keel, and Amos, on realizing just what the other had in mind would see that no jolt occurred to render Danny's footing insecure.

Accordingly the navigator stretched to his heart's content, finding great relief to his aching muscles in so doing. When finally he again resumed his old "squatting" attitude—peculiar to his daily grind when in the air mail service, and which had become a part of his former vocation, a habit bound to follow him all his life—Danny made his pal take a turn at the same method of getting a few worrysome kinks "ironed out."

Amos, too, found more or less relief, and wondered that they had not resorted to this method before. But in the sport of aviation, like any other sort of game, new discoveries crop up, so

satisfying that they are soon made a part of the regular programme. No one knows it all and pilots are always exchanging wonderful experiences and recommending new stunts to ameliorate the discomforts of long runs.

Down went the sun with never a cloud to be seen in all that broad expanse of deep blue sky. Danny gloried in that fact for it seemed to promise pretty weather for the rest of their long, tedious voyage across the greatest of oceans.

"Not a teenty sign of a typhoon in sight," he was telling himself, joyously, with dusk gathering her folds about them and the evening star visible in the heavens, looking as yet like a dim lantern hung on high, to grow brighter and brighter as Old Sol passed further down his daily trail.

Still the engine continued to run as evenly as at the start; surely human hands and brain had never before constructed such a wonder in an airplane motor, which to their fancy seemed to beat in rhythm with their own throbbing hearts and be a part of their very lives. No wonder Lindbergh, after hanging so long over the never failing labor of his motive power took to looking on it as his dependable *partner,* so that he spoke of "we" in a sense that every fellow who spends much of his time in cloudland can fully appreciate.

The time was slowly but surely rolling along to the grand climax, when their goal in sight they would drop upon that famous harbor off Yokohama, and mark their exploit as carried through.

With what joy would Amos send a cablegram, terse as was his habit, telling the anxious Mr. Carstairs of their safety and that the big job had been accomplished.

Danny was hugging himself in the very thought of that proud hour, when for the second time in a month he and his best pal could tell themselves they had "seen the record and 'gone it one better.'" As yet no aviator had flown across the Pacific even with a stop at Hawaii, though that was already under consideration by a number of daring pilots. In fact all manner of amazing propositions covering air voyages to the waste places of the world were discussed and mapped out, proving that a genuine fever had gripped the fliers of not only America but Europe as well, to write their names on the honored roll of those who had done much in the interests of scientific aviation.

Perhaps that heavy sigh which issued from Danny's lips when he pondered on these things, would indicate that deep down in his heart he deplored the promise they had given to Mr. Carstairs never to tell the world of the stunts they were engaged in pulling off, but a promise with Danny, even though given half-heartedly, was a sacred thing not to be lightly broken.

He could understand how the millionaire sportsman who so generously backed all the stupendous undertakings on which they were engaged shrank from making his connection with the same public

property, since he was bound to be swamped under applications from ambitious fliers who yearned to enter his service. Then, too, as Danny well understood, the other most of all did not wish to take away any of the honor and glory that had fallen to such meritorious navigators as Lindbergh, Byrd, Maitland, Wells, Chamberlin and others of their ilk, who so well deserved the name of heroic pioneers along the line of scientific explorers of the untracked air lines of the world.

They ate their "skimpy supper," as Danny contemptuously termed the evening meal, consisting as it did of just a solitary stale sandwich each, and a swallow of water, all that remained of the gallon put aboard off Hawaii. Amos took him to task for looking so disgusted with the apology of a meal, and in his note, perhaps the very last one he would ever have to write to his partner of the great adventure, bade him cheer up for there was a "good time coming."

"Our last night, old sport," he had written in his cheery fashion, "and with the rising sun tomorrow let's hope we'll be spreading our wings over Yeddo Harbor, with the flag of Nippon whipping in the breeze from the fort that I reckon guards the entrance into the bay. Then we can put our knees under a table again, or squat on the floor like most Japs do, while eating a bully old breakfast. Keep a stiff upper lip, partner, it'll soon all be over but the shouting. This same

motor, which is worth its weight in pure gold, is bound to see us through, with many another big trip in addition. Brace up and smile through once more, Danny. *We're It!*"

That was enough to fill Danny with a firm determination never to show the first sign of a faint heart; such fellows as Amos and he had been through too many serious situations to give way when all the signs seemed so propitious. Another night—only ten hours at the most, it being now eight by his wrist-watch—and the windup of the voyage through the great spaces would be over. Yes, and when that came to pass he would have a chance to work all those gripping pains and cramps out of his lower extremities. Danny only hoped he might not find himself crippled for life by reason of the long continued strain.

Now the bright galaxy of stars shone with refulgent light from horizon to horizon. Danny believed he had never in all his life seen the heavenly luminaries, moon and stars, quite so brilliant as they were on this, their last night as he fervently hoped, speeding over the seemingly endless waters of the broad Pacific.

So began the "watch and watch" arrangement that had worked so successfully thus far all through their lengthy run, with the eager expectation of a resting spell to be realized in a few hours.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SNOWY CAP OF FUJIYAMA

Although both comrades had snatched short naps during the day Danny found himself tremendously sleepy when it came nine o'clock. There was no occasion for any worry since everything seemed to be moving along with clock-like precision. Amos was taking the first trick, for he saw how weary his pal appeared to be, so Danny was able to rest. The other sat there, almost immovable, his attention given up wholly to his task of keeping tabs on the various indicators and gadgets—now dropping down close to the surface of the heaving sea and anon climbing up to the lofty spaces, where an occasional fleecy cloud passed over the face of the full moon.

It was an ideal night, and Amos chuckled to himself more than a few times at realizing how abundantly they had been favored by the elements during the better part of their lengthy cruise. Excepting the baffling fog, which however had done them no harm, and that one stormy spell everything had moved along as finely as though the weather had been made to order. It really seemed as if the elements, despairing of preventing ambitious man from copying the eagle and exploring the region of the clouds had thrown up their

hands in despair and surrendered to Progress.

When, finally, after keeping up his vigil much longer than was mapped out in dividing the night watches between them, Amos awoke his companion, Danny felt guilty on discovering that it was exactly twelve o'clock; Amos had in his generous way given him a whole extra hour to make good his loss of sleep.

This was getting around some, to be sure—midnight on the Pacific, and within six hours' passage, possibly even less, of the Japanese coast. How it thrilled the one who took the controls and prepared to keep his lonely vigil. Never would he forget the ecstatic state of suspense that now possessed his entire being so that he no longer felt sleepy. Indeed, Danny was convinced that he would be unable to lose himself in further slumber up to the time they actually knew the eventual outcome of the Great Adventure.

Nevertheless his decision to remain on deck so as to be the first to discover the welcome signs of "land ahead" as dawn began to break, suffered a collapse when some three hours had dragged along, and against his will Danny found it necessary to accept the offer of his pal, when Amos aroused and demanded that he "drop out of the harness."

Once he passed into dreamland the minutes crept on unnoticed and changed into hours. When finally Amos poked him Danny, sitting up, and finding himself able to see the rolling billows

down below, showing that morning was at hand, looked eagerly ahead, suspecting that his companion would not have awakened him even then if there were not most welcome news awaiting the sleeper.

It was growing light in the east while the shadows still hung over the mysterious west; but Danny seemed to sense an invigorating truth. Snatching up the binoculars, placed handily for immediate use, he glued his eyes to the magical lens as well as his trembling hands permitted.

What a joyous sensation passed like a shock of electricity through his entire being when he felt positive he was able barely to make out what must be the coast line of a western nation that could be no other than Nippon, the land of their dreams, and which meant the ultimate success of their daring enterprise.

Long and yearningly did Danny gaze, while the prospect became more and more distinct with every passing minute, as the light grew stronger. Then, remembering how he had a faithful pal along, just as deeply interested in the outcome of the dash across the sea as himself, Danny made signs for Amos to take his turn at gazing upon the absorbing sight dead ahead.

All doubt was removed from the mind of Amos when presently he was able to make out an object serving as a background to the coast line. This was none other than the snow-crowned cap of famous Fujiyama, the volcano so beloved by all

Japanese that seldom does a painted picture appear on fire-screen or wall-covering but that the sacred mountain occupies a prominent place thereon.

And on finding how wonderfully their earth-inductor compass had worked to keep them directly on their course through all those long, anxious hours, Amos was filled with wonder bordering on awe.

What might not the knights of the speeding plane hope to accomplish in the realm of world-wide exploration and discovery when backed by such near-perfect aviator's instruments and flying-machines as were being placed at their service in these days of marvelous inventions! The mastery of the air seemed to be almost accomplished as it was, there being left only methods for making the science of flight safe and sane, devoid of most risks that still persisted in taking such heavy toll of ambitious young lives.

Danny could not restrain his emotions and let forth such tremendous whoops and cheers that they came dimly to his companion's hearing, deadened as it was from the continual roar of the exhausts through every minute of the long siege they had passed through. And indeed, Amos, cool customer that he usually proved himself to be, felt almost as exuberant as his more lively pal, being in full sympathy with the latter's feelings.

Would land ever look so welcome as it did then

to their enraptured eyes? What mattered it that they would be stepping on alien territory, where Americans were not in the best odor just then among the masses, owing to those California land-ownership troubles? It would be joy beyond description just to feel firm ground under their soles, after such a stretch of uncertain footing in a heavier-than-air flying-machine.

They were still far distant from their ultimate destination, but to the exultant Danny this was a matter that "counted less than a flea-bite." Even though some trouble came to pass that would put their steady-working motor "on the blink," he was assuring himself they could manage to drop down on the sea and be towed into the harbor and to safety. Yes, their audacious undertaking had come to its grand finale and must be recorded as an accomplished fact beyond any dispute. They had the record of leaving San Francisco on the afternoon of July eleventh, and here, at around six o'clock on the morning of July fourteenth, they were arriving at Yokohama, with Tokio only a few miles away!

Now that it was all a thing of the past, Danny already began to forget the discomforts and perils to which they had been subject, and make light of what at one time loomed up as an almost prohibitive ambitious achievement. Such is human nature, seeing mountains where none exist, and letting actual perils, encountered when life possibly hung by a mere thread, assume the guise of

along any baked dog or smoked rats on us, but mole-hills, once the crisis has been safely passed.

Danny felt positive his wise pal must have all necessary information concerning Yokohama, and would be able to lead the way to a meeting with the representative of Mr. Carstairs, who had been cabled when to look for them, so as to have ready such things as Amos must possess in order to continue on his way to Tokio—and beyond if good news came from the backer of the expedition.

"There's that big job of changin' our pontoons for wheels before we start away from Yokohama," he told himself, as they continued to draw nearer their objective. "I only hope we're not held up long, because I'm just about crazy to know what Mr. Carstairs' decision will be after he gets the cable Amos means to send from here. And say, mebbe I won't do a thing to some grub the first chance I get, for I feel just caved-away down below-stairs. I sure hope they don't try to pass then it's only the Chinks who specialize on that kind of stuff, so we're safe."

Now they could see the fine harbor with their naked eye. All sorts of shipping seemed to be anchored there or tied up at the docks, while the chief arsenal and dockyard of the empire known as Yokusuka, could be seen not a great way off.

Numerous queer boats with sails caught the eager gaze of Danny. These he knew must be the native sampans, in which frail craft the venturesome Japanese fishermen do not hesitate to go

far out on the ocean in pursuit of their finny quarry. So, too, much of the trading of the port is carried on by means of those stable little native craft, which one comes to look upon with increasing respect the more he knows of their good qualities.

Amos, meanwhile, while at the stick, was looking eagerly for a good place where he could drop down on the fairly quiet waters of this protected harbor. It would not do to have an accident mar their otherwise perfect score. Such a thing would of course "put a crimp" in their plans for a continuous flight all the way across Asia and Europe, to the starting point on the California coast. Moreover, the water of Yeddo Harbor was said to be infested with ferocious man-eating sharks, so that an upset was likely to be fraught with unpleasant potentialities that made poor Danny shudder even at the thought, for among his pet aversions were bull-dogs, bellowing bulls proper, and savage sharks hovering around to snap up a juicy meal.

The sight of a strange, foreign-looking aircraft coming in from the east, no doubt attracted considerable curiosity as well as speculation along the water-front of quaint Yokohama early on the morning of that July day. Those who were astir at this unseemly hour stood with their necks craned watching the sturdily-built plane circle, as though the pilot might be making up his mind just where to attempt his descent. They might also

have noticed that a red streamer of cloth floated from one side of the ship. Danny had seen to that detail, knowing it was the prearranged signal to tell the man who was to take charge of them while at the port that a pioneer airplane had flown directly from America to Japan for the first time.

Presently, Amos, having picked out a suitable spot for landing, made a nose-dive as fine as could be imagined, swung on to an even keel when almost in touch with the water, sailed slowly along and with the grace of a wild-duck struck the surface of the bay. Along this the plane taxied slower and slower, until Danny received the order to bring his emergency anchor into play.

Five minutes later the *Pathfinder* was riding safely at anchor in Yokohama Harbor, having gallantly carried herself through every stage of weather, and across six thousand miles of deep sea waters in triumph, and without the engine skipping once in its operation of some sixty-two consecutive hours.

No wonder they were proud of what they had accomplished. Danny was fain to puff out his chest after the manner of a pouter pigeon, and grin without stopping, he felt so happy. It also kindled his patriotism to know the feat had been accomplished by two youngsters, native-born Americans, and, it was to be hoped, worthy followers of such heroic figures as had already endeared themselves to all lovers of gigantic deeds along the aerial line of exploration and adventure.

CHAPTER XX

DROPPING INTO YEDDO HARBOR

"Great stuff, Amos, that landing!" Danny was saying, in his exultation, and wondered why his pal paid no attention whatever to his compliment, but was looking eagerly across the harbor as if anticipating the coming of some one.

Danny, completely tired out after such strenuous aerial travel, sat there and took in deep breaths as he feasted his eyes on all the new and quaint sights of the great Japanese seaport. Then, chancing to glance toward his mate, he saw Amos' lips moving but heard no sound of words.

"Bonehead, Danny Cooper, that's what you are!" burst from the now grinning navigator. "Didn't it strike you that both of us are stone deaf because of that fiendish racket day and night, all these hours? Hey! Amos, listen: can you make the grade and hear me speaking to you? I'm as deaf as an adder, don't you know?"

Amos on his part smiled, as though the idea had occurred that he missed something, and had a queer buzzing in his brain after the roar of the busy-bee motor and whirr of the propeller had suddenly ceased.

A naphtha launch started from a dock and was heading directly toward them.

"Same here, Danny, I reckon," he called out, cupping his hands in order to make his husky voice carry better; "but that's bound to pass away soon. A bit unpleasant while it lasts, of course, but we've got lots to be thankful for, just the same."

"You bet we have, old pal. So, this is Japan, is it? I kind of like the looks of it so far. Wonder if that gent glimpsed my red flag. He couldn't hardly have missed seeing us, and we understood that was to be our card of introduction. I'd like a heap to step ashore and stretch my legs a bit. You hear me talkin', Amos pard?"

Amos on his part had become interested in a naphtha launch that had started from a dock and was heading directly toward them.

"Strikes me that may be the party we want most to see, Danny," he bellowed, pointing as he said this.

"I sure hope so," muttered the other to himself, as he also focussed his gaze on the approaching craft, which had its duplicate thousands of times on American waters, but might be looked upon as appropriate for the exclusive use of a well-to-do gentleman in this foreign port.

In a brief time it came alongside the anchored *Pathfinder*. A florid gentleman was standing in the cabin part, staring at them as though unable to believe what his eyes beheld. Danny understood at once he was not to the manner born, no Japanese business man but rather English;

though from having spent many years of his life under skies of Nippon he probably considered himself "one of the crowd."

"Pardon me," he was saying, "but is either of you Mr. Amos Green?"

"Please speak louder, sir," Amos ventured to remark, never having heard a single word, although he could easily surmise the import of what was said; "we are a bit hard of hearing, you see, after all that racket of our motor for so long a stretch."

The other smiled pleasantly as he went on to call out:

"Right-o! I can well believe it, Mr. Green. Although not an aviator myself I have been up a few times, and always had a ringing in my ears for some hours afterwards. Can you come aboard if we push closer; I want to shake hands with two such wonderful young chaps, and congratulate you on your notable voyage across the Pacific!"

Amos heard this perfectly, and almost instinctively he placed a finger on his lips, as if to beg that the gentleman would not give their secret away.

"No danger," came back on the instant; "my native at the wheel here, taken in place of Godigo, who is ill, doesn't understand a word of English, though a good navigator," and turning to the squatty Jap gave him some order in his own language. That being carried out, the motorboat

came closer, so the two stiff-kneed occupants of the plane cockpits were able with some difficulty to clamber aboard.

The handshaking of the English resident of Yokohama was as warm and friendly as any one could wish, and his ruddy face beamed with pleasure as he thus came in contact with the chaps who according to his mind had accomplished one of the nerviest undertakings the lengthy roll of aviation records could boast, up to date.

"I had warning of this some time back in a letter from my friend, whom you know as Mr. Carstairs, in which he explained what he contemplated doing, if only he could find the right men for the job. Then came his cablegram giving your name stating when you expected to reach Yokohama if Fortune favored your venture. I am delighted to meet you both and congratulate you with all my heart on the successful outcome of your voyage across seas. And now that we know each other, let us get down, as you Americans delight to say, to brass tacks. Your wheels are here, and only wait to be exchanged for those pontoons, when you can set out for Tokio."

"Attaboy!" exclaimed the pleased Danny, on learning this important fact, as he had been dreading lest some delay might break up all their great plans. "That does set me up high, I'm telling you right now. Give us wheels and we can do most anything on the map."

Amos, too, was delighted, to judge from his "heavenly smile," as his devoted chum sometimes called it.

"I want to get ashore just as soon as possible, Mr. Henderson," he went on to explain, "for it is necessary to notify Mr. Carstairs without delay of our safe arrival, you understand."

"To be sure, Mr. Green," came the quick reply. "I comprehend how he will be quite anxious about this time. The plane can be towed to a float connected with our aviation field and the work started immediately. I have made every necessary arrangement, it being a rare delight to favor a friend whom I honor as much as I do your Mr. Carstairs."

"Hot dog!" cried Danny, bubbling over with enthusiasm; "but that is as good as any American preparedness I ever ran across, which remark, sir, is meant for the highest compliment I'm capable of paying."

"And how long will it take them to make the change, do you know, sir?" asked Amos, getting to the point with his accustomed directness.

"I do not know of my own familiarity with such jobs," came the answer, "but the man in charge of the gang of native mechanics whom I have engaged to do everything that seems necessary, informs me he thinks it may be put through in about an hour—two at the most."

"Fine!" Amos observed, nodding in a pleased fashion. "Then as soon as we go ashore I shall

ask you to take me to the cable office, so I may get that important duty off my chest."

"It shall be done without any unnecessary delay, Mr. Green. This is an opportunity to have a hand in a notable accomplishment that does not knock at my door every day, and I would gladly forget my own business and all else for the satisfaction of lending you assistance."

Amos warmed toward this Mr. Henderson on discovering that he was not at all fashioned after the cold, austere type of Englishman as portrayed in much of the literature he had read.

So the little launch started to tow the unwieldy air-craft through the harbor, the pontoons making it much easier than it looked. Shortly afterward they drew alongside a floating dock that seemed to be connected with a runway leading up to the chief aviation field of Yokohama port.

Here they found awaiting them a party of little but sturdy native mechanics, accustomed apparently to working with motors and all requisites of aircraft, of which a number were to be seen in nearby hangars. It was not a difficult job to drag the *Pathfinder* out of the water on to the land, and after that the squad became as busy as so many beavers, under the direction of a boss with authority and long experience.

Danny was to "hang around" while his pal was away with Mr. Henderson, not that he was expected to try to take a hand in the exchange of new-fashioned aluminum pontoons for wheels,

since he could not for the life of him understand one word of what was being said; but in a general way Danny might keep an eye on things, so that there would be no pilfering or prying into their secrets.

It chanced that Danny was suspicious of all newspaper men whom he believed to be patterned after the same clever model the wide world over. Some one might have "leaked" just enough to put a "nosey reporter on the track of a big scoop," and among these greasy mechanics how was he to know there did not chance to be a scribe, eager to pick up news that could be cabled around the world as an event of prime importance? Well, nothing like that was going to come to pass while Danny Cooper was on deck and had the full use of his good eyes and hands. Woe to the unfortunate Jap who attempted to lift the lid and pry into their private matters, that was all!

Feeling that with Danny on the ground and the mechanics hard at work it would be safe to leave the plane for a short time, Amos started off with the accommodating Mr. Henderson in a car the latter had waiting, doubtless foreseeing how the two air navigators would naturally desire to communicate with Mr. Carstairs as speedily as possible.

In this way they were presently threading the quaint streets of Yokohama, already crowded with natives busy in their daily grind, just as is the case in any other big city, whether in America,

Europe or distant Australia. Amos could enjoy feasting his eyes on the novel sights that cropped up along the way to the cable offices even if his mind was taken up with the important business in hand. He asked many questions, too, his hearing by slow degrees seeming to improve, and in this way picked up considerable information, which later on he would pass along to Danny.

Once or twice they were blocked in some narrow street by a congestion of cars, rickshaws and trudging people, so their progress was not quite so rapid as the eager air pilot might have wished, but eventually they entered the office of the cable company.

Amos had already prepared his brief but important message so that he was able to write it immediately, while Mr. Henderson spoke to the chief clerk, possibly to explain something of the necessity for the quick transmission of the cablegram. This was what Amos wrote, terse and to the point:

"Arrived six this morning—all well—no trouble —start Tokio in hour—everything worked like charm—cable to Tokio. Amos Green."

CHAPTER XXI

CALLERS FROM THE AIR

Well, that important duty had been carried through, and Mr. Carstairs in San Francisco, more than six thousand miles distant, would speedily learn that his dashing young aviators had actually succeeded in realizing one of the chief dreams of his life—spanning the Pacific at one hop in a heavier-than-air plane, made entirely of American material, by American mechanics, carried on its momentous journey through space by native-born pilot and navigator, and the undertaking made a complete success through the aid of new inventions and devices fashioned entirely by Yankee cunning and skill!

There would have been much pleasure for Amos in being able to stay over in that intensely Japanese port of Yokohama for a day or two, feasting his eyes on the wonderful sights of which he had read with such keen delight—the famous tea-rooms, geisha girls, and those who were professional dancers, the Bund alongside the harbor of which so much had been written by sight-seeing travelers, the unique bridges leading to the real native city of Kana-gawa, and named Minato-Bashi and Kame-no Bashi. These, and a score of other typical scenes, Amos had stored up in his

memory, with the full intention of seeing them with his own eyes if by chance he were delayed in Yokohama. Such a thing might happen, when they would be returning by steamer, with the plane crated in the hold, the around-the-world trip having been abandoned for some reason or other.

But alas! there was no chance for those delightful things; when engaged in a race against time such idle pleasures must be thrown into the discard and given a back seat, since Duty chained them to the great task they had so willingly assumed when the Golden Chance crossed their trail and beckoned them on.

On reaching the aviation field again Amos found, much to his satisfaction, that considerable progress had been made in effecting the substitution of wheels for pontoons. The latter would be left in charge of Mr. Henderson for shipping back to San Francisco, as they might be needed at some future date. Who could say what Quixotic voyage Mr. Carstairs might not be mapping out for his two ambitious proteges, that would take them once more across mighty seas, possibly to the Philippines, or still further to Australia, whither no man had thus far flown from America.

"How soon can we get away, sir?" asked Amos, when he had watched the mechanics for some little time.

"The boss says in another half-hour the job will have been completed," came the satisfying answer. "I take it for granted you mean to do

any little shopping that seems necessary after you reach Tokio, and get in touch with Mr. Hawkins, who is connected with your embassy there, and I understand has known Mr. Carstairs even longer than it has been my very great pleasure."

"That is our plan, sir," replied Amos, who felt under especial obligations to this genial, red-faced English lover of sport, and would often recall their odd meeting on Yeddo Bay with satisfaction. "We shall possibly have to wait over twenty-four hours, so as to receive an answer to my cablegram. That message will decide our future moves, whether to push ahead, and circle the globe as planned, or crate the ship and return home by steamer. So the delay will give us plenty of time to do all we figure on: putting in our little communicating phone so as to be able to talk while on the wing, securing the parachute packs that are waiting for us there, picking up some provisions and drink, besides having the bus tested in every particular so as to find if the slightest defect has developed after that hard strain."

"My word, I can see just why Mr. Carstairs hit on you for his representative, Mr. Green," observed the Englishman with a broad smile; "you are the last word when it comes to push, energy, endurance, daring and everything that goes to make up a successful aviator. Some years back I should have dearly loved to be off in search of adventure in the company of just such a chap as

you seem to be, Amos, but I'm a bit too old now to let such dreams break in upon my golf, and such mild amusements. But the spirit of *doing things* still lives deep down in my heart, and my thoughts will follow you two as you wing your way across Siberian steppes, over Manchurian valleys, Russian soviet cities, and so on all the way back to your own America, greatest of all the countries of the world."

Amos liked him more than ever when he heard him say that; it was really the first time in all his experience that he had heard an Englishman frankly yield the palm for supremacy to America.

Amos was already scanning the aviation field and finding it to be very similar to such landing-places in the States. He could see how there was plenty of room for any pilot to lift his ship successfully before reaching the termination of the leveled ground, but with the caution of a careful pilot Amos walked along the runway, making sure there were no stones on the track, contact with which might cause a nose-over and bring about serious disaster.

In due time, when the half hour specified by the native boss had expired, everything had been completed and the wheels attached to the plane in place of the serviceable, but no longer needed pontoons.

"Hop aboard, Danny!" called out Amos, after both of them had shaken hands with the extraordinary Britisher; "we're due to get a move on

and fetch up in the Jap capital after a little run."

"I'm with you, old scout; you hear me shoutin'," came the immediate reply of the navigator, as he swung himself into his pet "cupboard," and squatted like some queer species of human toad, glancing from sheer habit over the various dials and indicators that adorned his black dashboard just as they were duplicated in the forward compartment.

Amos gave her the gun and as merrily as ever the motor started its racket warming up while the propeller whirled like mad. The blocks being kicked out of the way after the test had shown the engine to be in tune and ready for business, the plane started with a rush, leaving Mr. Henderson staring after them in surprise and delight.

The morning breeze came off the bay, and hence it would be necessary for them to rise as birds always do, against it; but this would not deter them from quickly circling and heading toward the southwest, so as to make Tokio. Now they were thundering along, with Japanese pilots and observers, working about the various native ships just outside their hangars, watching their passage with curiosity and the deep seated interest all airmen take in others of their profession.

Amos "knew his stuff" as Danny would say, and with the plane's tail clear of the ground and nose pointed upward toward the sun, he lifted her in a zoom that was magnificent.

It seems perfectly natural to be thus aboard the ship, and spreading out in a general line toward the West. Danny forgot all about the late cramps in his lower extremities, even forebore grumbling because neither of them had partaken of food, save a little fruit, since the preceding evening, when it may be remembered they each feasted on one lone very hard and stale sandwich, washed down with a swig of flat water taken on at Honolulu.

"Wonderful lot of pictures, I'd tell the world," he kept saying to himself, as he drank in the ever-changing view of gentlemen's odd-looking gardens, strange appearing temples and pagodas, dwarfed trees that looked like miniature shrubs, yet absolutely perfect in every respect, flowery arbors, playing fountains, and every other type of thing differing radically from those to which Danny was accustomed to seeing at home, but which went to make up a continuous picture especially fascinating.

Always they could detect figures of Japanese women and children in those same secluded gardens, all staring upwards, as though the sight of an airplane had not yet become so common as to fail to rivet their attention. Danny waved to them as they passed over at a low altitude; for Amos felt no inclination to spiral upward, and miss all these wonderful scenes, so new, so strange to their Western eyes.

That they were approaching Tokio could be

readily seen, from the increasing travel along the roads leading from the seaport to the capital. Cars were fairly plentiful, although the main stream of traffic seemed to consist of the universal jinrikisha, of which there were countless numbers abroad, going and coming, each drawn by a nimble-footed, bare-legged runner.

While Amos was looking this way and that for some sign of the aviation field where he meant to land, he suddenly found himself face to face with the one dreaded dilemma that confronts every pilot when in the air—his dependable motor, that had functioned for something like fourteen thousand miles without once missing a single stroke, went dead without a second's warning!

When his engine thus stalled Amos knew there was but one thing for him to attempt, which was to ease the plane as much as possible to the ground, so in landing he might not do irreparable injury to the under parts, or some of the more delicate instruments.

Had he been five thousand feet up at the time he must have made a succession of nose dives, until within dropping distance of the earth, though even then the impetus of his descent would very likely have brought about a crash.

There was what looked like an open field of some sort just a little way ahead, and if only he could succeed in reaching this, some sort of a half-way decent landing might be carried through. It seemed to be a forlorn hope at best, but

there was nothing else in sight, and sick at heart on account of the possibility of their vast undertaking being ruined, he did his level best to coax the ship to stretch out, and make the field.

But it was not fated to be. At the time lack of altitude threatened to "play hob" with this suddenly conceived scheme. Apparently they would strike short of their objective and land in that wonderfully attractive Jap garden Danny had been admiring so fervently.

Just the same, no matter what followed, it was part of his obligation to Mr. Carstairs, to Danny and to himself to render the shock as slight as lay in his power. The damages to that specialized plot of ground could be settled after the worst had happened, unless he and Danny were hauled off to be incarcerated in a Tokio dungeon for their temerity in ruining the highly prized garden of some wealthy Japanese gentleman, and all sorts of awful things follow after.

Danny clutched the coaming of his cockpit and waited for the shock, his heart seeming to cease its beating as he realized how easily the best laid plans of mice and men "gang aft aglee."

It was an amazingly clever landing they made after all. Just how that wizard at the stick managed it Danny never could tell, but he must class it among the seven wonders of modern aviation, and doubted whether even Amos could ever duplicate such a neat trick.

And so they came down in the midst of flower-beds, statues, miniature fountains, lovely little grottoes, to find themselves uninvited guests in a Japanese garden!

CHAPTER XXII

LADY LUCK PLAYS A JOKE

Thanks to the extraordinary pancake landing made by Cool Amos, neither of the adventurous cloud-voyagers was more than shaken. Indeed, hardly had the ship come to a rest with a quiver than a figure scrambled out of the rear compartment of the double cockpit and landed on all fours amidst the wreckage of the garden flora.

It was the tremendously excited Danny Cooper. His face looked white and tensely drawn, and his first act was to crawl halfway under the fusilage as it rested upon a pyramid of crushed shrubbery, as though his one thought might be to ascertain first of all, even before he knew whether he had sustained any serious injuries himself, just how badly the beloved ship had been smashed in that sad fall.

Then came Cool Amos, deliberately climbing down from his cubbyhole, as if not at all alarmed, though, if one could read behind that calm exterior there might be a different story to tell.

Came a shout that had a vein of almost intoxicating joy in its utterance.

"Amos! oh! Amos, I don't believe she's been damaged hardly a bit, after all, thanks to that

dandy landing you made. Why, we're in great luck I tell you, and that's no lie either."

With these expressive words Danny came wriggling out from under the body of the plane, that dreadful white look on his puckered face rapidly giving way to a lively grin, so transforming had the reaction been.

Amos on his part got down on hands and knees to corroborate the glad tidings; and after a superficial examination he found his own heart bounding with relief that could not be fully expressed in words.

"Well, it was something of a close shave, I'd say," was the only remark he allowed himself; for until a better examination could be made there would always remain a certain amount of doubt concerning the damage sustained.

He had seen at a glance that several of the wing struts had given way in the shock, but that did not seem to worry the pilot, knowing as he did how readily such matters could be remedied—they were always prepared to mend broken wires and both had long since become proficient workmen along the line of making such casual repairs.

So Amos thrust out his hand, and Danny quickly gave it a really ferocious squeeze.

"I've made many a forced landing in my time," he ejaculated; "but never in such good trim as this one. Why, Amos, I was certain everything was off and that our ship must pull up in a wash. But now we're going to get in hot water I reckon,

Pal Amos, for here's the big gun Jap gentleman hurrying up to learn what the devil we mean smashing his lovely garden into flinders with a clumsy old boat. You handle him, pal. You've got the smooth tongue that soothes the savage beast every time. I'll play dumbbell while you rub him the right way."

Approaching them from the direction of the quaint low building that seemed just to belong to that especial garden, it was so intensely Japanese in every way, was a gentleman. He did not wear the customary clothes of the true Jap, although his face was well tanned. Amos also noticed that while of course more or less confounded by the dropping of a wide-winged, cloud-chaser in the midst of his orderly and delightful garden patch, the newcomer at least did not look as though he would like to eat them alive.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he observed, calmly, and Danny felt relieved to know the owner of the place spoke such good English, for most of all he had dreaded being abused in a language that was like Greek to him. "Little did I dream this fine morning I should be thus honored by a visitor from the clouds. I hope neither of you have been injured by this accident?"

"I'm glad to say we seem to be all right, sir," Amos assured the solicitous one; "and best of all we have reason to believe our ship has sustained little damage. But I must apologize first of all for making you this sudden call, and with-

out an invitation, too; but these planes are a little shy on etiquette, and apt to do unaccountable things when they take a notion. I'm afraid we've made something of a horrid mess of your beautiful garden, sir."

The gentleman actually smiled and Danny felt warming up to such a good sport.

"Don't mention it, I beg of you," the owner of the place hastened to say, as he looked keenly first at one then the other of his uninvited guests; "the damage is far from being irreparable, I assure you; and a month from now no one could tell that there had been an invasion. I take it you are from America, unless my ears deceive me?"

"Hot dog! now, what do you know about that?" ejaculated Danny, unwilling to allow himself to be wholly effaced. "Our brogue must be something fierce if people c'n tell us a mile off."

"It happens to be a fact, sir," Amos followed by saying, at the same time opening his eyes wide, as though a dim suspicion had suddenly started to grip him.

"Possibly, too, I am adressing Amos Green?" continued the other, the flicker of a smile commencing to break over his face.

Amos nodded assent, while Danny gasped, and stared, too amazed to give utterance to his agitated feelings.

"And your comrade here, is he not one Danny Cooper?" continued the amused owner of the

devastated garden, looking as though he might be obtaining a vast amount of enjoyment out of the strange situation.

Danny was so tongue-tied he could not say a single word, only wag his head up and down in a helpless manner, as though he half imagined he must be dreaming all this.

"I suspected that as soon as I discovered that the plane I had heard humming beyond the tree hedge yonder, had taken a sudden notion to drop in on me for an early morning visit. Permit me to hand you my card, Mr. Green."

Before he looked down at the pasteboard the other had thrust into his hand Amos understood; yet the astounding fact did not seem to disturb his customary calm, unruffled demeanor; one glance he gave, and then passed the card to Danny's trembling fingers.

"Mr. Leonard Hawkins,
U. S. Embassy,
Tokio."

Danny's lips could be seen to move violently, but never a sound issued forth, since he no longer had any necessity for playing "dumb" when temporarily at least his voice was utterly silenced, and he could only stare and tremble with the commingled flood of amazement, relief and great joy that had taken possession of his heart.

"A remarkable evidence of the fact that planes do have sagacity, and also eyes after all," Amos

went on to say, as he gripped the hand extended so heartily, and gave it a vigorous squeeze that belied his cool outer demeanor. "You see, Mr. Hawkins, we were on our way to the Tokio aviation field, after which we meant to look you up; but in passing over your place this clever ship of ours took a notion to cut the Gordian knot by swooping down on that nice open field just beyond. Our dependable motor, that has carried us some fourteen thousand miles without a single hitch, balked, and went dead, hence this wreckage of your garden, which we both greatly deplore. But we are mighty glad to meet you, sir."

"Any friends of Mr. Carstairs are as welcome as the morning sun in my humble house, Amos," continued the other, warmly, "and I am especially honored by having this opportunity of playing host to a couple of true sportsmen, who have, I am inclined to believe, just accomplished one of the most astounding feats on record—flying without a single stop across the mighty Pacific."

Danny managed to recover the use of his tongue when returning the grip of the representative of his country, at least sufficiently to whisper several times his favorite exclamation.

"The one thing," said Amos, with a look of concern, "that stands up before us like the white peak of your Fujiyama is connected with the damage our ship may have sustained; how under the sun are we going to get her out of your garden, Mr. Hawkins."

"Don't let that worry you, my friend," replied the other, cheerily. "She is welcome to nest here for as lengthy a stay as you'd like; although I imagine, from what I know about your plans, that is something you'd not be satisfied to be very long. Very well, it should be easy to lay a runway of planks over to the border of that field yonder, which in fact is being prepared for yet another airport. Flying, you must know, has taken hold of this progressive people with a vengeance, and some of their best aces will give us Americans a run for our money in a little while, since they have absolutely no nerves, and are as adventurous as the Lindberghs and Byrds of our own beloved land."

This was indeed most comforting intelligence for the two stranded voyagers. From gloom to exceeding great joy in one bound was what Danny Cooper experienced. He stepped along with the other two when Amos observed that he would take a look and see if what the owner of the garden had proposed could be put into execution; so that presently, having measured off the distance, and made mental calculations, Amos decided it could be readily done.

"Make a bigger mess of things, though, Mr. Hawkins," he remarked regretfully. "Seems like a shame to have such a thing drop down on you like lightning from a clear sky, a bolt from the blue, as they say."

"Don't mention it, Amos—I'm only too glad to

have you visit me under any conditions, for your Mr. Carstairs is a very dear friend of mine. And besides, I shall be amply compensated for such slight damage done to my dwarf trees and such local shrubbery by having you under my roof for one night at least, where I can hear all about your magnificent voyage through cloudland and across the mighty ocean. And never a word of what you tell me will pass my lips; for I understand how all of these delightful exploration and scientific cruises awaiting your attention are intended only to satisfy a modest gentleman's desire to prove what he has always claimed to be a truth—that many a genius is born to blush unseen and waste his fragrance on the desert air amidst the ordinary duties of our air-mail service. That was the way he put it in his last letter, telling me what vast undertaking he had laid out, when he had found the right man. Then came his cablegram informing me that I might have the pleasure of welcoming his two knights of the airplane lines any day, if indeed you carried through, which I confess was a bit doubtful in my mind."

Amos was all energy now that the impending disaster had turned out so delightfully. He started to discuss his immediate plans. First, Mr. Hawkins would set men to work laying down the plank runway to the neighboring field; while this was being done he and Danny would make a close examination of the ship to find and repair any damage she had received. It was hoped there

might be no necessity for employing a gang of mechanics; for such an undertaking was apt to cause some sort of leak, so that the stunning fact of their having made the great jump from continent to continent would become common property, to be flashed around the world and thus annoy their generous patron more than words could tell.

Later on it would not be difficult to replenish the tanks with a fresh supply of gasoline and lubricating oil, to arrange the phones as Amos had decided, to take aboard the two parachute packs that Mr. Hawkins had been able to secure after much hunting in Tokio, where such arrangements were not as yet in general use amidst the "furniture" of all airships.

Amos, with his customary preparedness, had arranged a complete list covering the numerous things they were to take on while lingering at Tokio, awaiting further orders from the home port, where Mr. Carstairs "pulled the strings by which they danced," as Danny put it, "like a couple of wired figures in a Punch and Judy show, backed by a master ventriloquist."

Their careful examination of the plane and motor convinced Amos that Lady Luck had indeed been with them when making this unexpected landing. The damage was only superficial, and it would be a small job indeed to remedy things.

Remarkable as it seemed even the motor, having brought about the forced landing and saved

them much trouble in hunting up Mr. Hawkins, decided to return once more to its former normal condition; for when Amos, sitting in his accustomed position, pulled the gun, lo! and behold, to the inexpressible delight of puzzled Danny there broke out the old familiar roar, and away went the propeller spinning at its accustomed dizzy rate of so many revolutions a minute, just as if all this row could be put down as a mere joke!

Danny, harkening to that beloved racket, now so sweet to his ears, threw up both hands, as if to say "can you beat that for a lightning change of front? Just like a woman, too, thinkin' she would, and then she wouldn't. Hot dog! no wonder they always say *'she'* when speakin' about a plane and a motor, they're so whimsy at times."

When noon came and they went into meet Mr. Hawkins' family and have a famous luncheon, things were being straightened out with marvelous rapidity.

CHAPTER XXIII

TOKIO BY LANTERN LIGHT

After lunch, which Mr. Hawkins hurried along upon learning that his two guests from the other side of the Pacific had hardly eaten a bite for the last twenty-four hours and were almost ravenous for food, he and Amos started to the city to do some necessary shopping. Danny was left to potter about the plane, making good the slight damage, and being on hand to supervise affairs when gasoline and other supplies came along.

It may be put down as certain that Amos noticed a thousand-and-one quaint things that came their way as they passed along some of the principal streets of the great Japanese capital, even if his thoughts were so thoroughly taken up with the various items he had on his list. Later on, if by any chance he and his pal were forced to stay a day longer while Mr. Carstairs decided on their future course, they could find abundant opportunity to prowl around the unique city and drink in their fill of curious sights, all new to their Yankee eyes.

First of all he again cabled to the "boss," as Danny nearly always called their backer, when referring to him directly, though never in any but a most affectionate and respectful fashion.

Next he managed to use the land wire to send word of their *possible* coming to one Mr. Alexander Philpot, also an American friend of Mr. Carstairs located at Harbin, which would be their first stopover after leaving Tokio; also to one Colonel Ivan Petrokoff at the Siberian city of Irkutsk, and still a third agent located in Omsk, by name Felipe Nagasaki, whom he understood to be a pure-blooded Japanese, with whom the rich American had formerly had pleasant business relations, and who was under many obligations to him.

Of course it all depended on whether the message they expected to receive from San Francisco was favorable to their continuing on the projected swing around the world in an unprecedented limited number of days, although Amos had hardly a single doubt about it proving to be as they hoped. The worst and most perilous part of the long journey had already been safely negotiated when the *Pathfinder* alighted like a sea duck on the calm surface of Yokohama Harbor after a wonderfully successful flight. Secretly Amos was keen about continuing the encircling voyage, now that they had made such a glorious start. The golden opportunity might never knock at their door again if allowed to slip past this time.

Next he looked up a battery suitable for the projected telephone communication between the plane's cockpits, besides a number of small but important things he had listed as necessary to his peace of mind. That preparedness which accom-

panied Amos Green, no matter where he chanced to be at starting out on a trip, caused him to foresee eventualities long before they came to pass. Like oil on rusty gadgets and cogwheels it often proved its worth a hundred-fold; when you wanted certain things you needed them badly, and the fact of having "toted" them along, when grounded on some lonely desert, or floating on the bosom of the vast sea, was most satisfying.

Returning to the resting-place of the ship he found that the supplies had all been delivered with a speed that went far to prove how the nickname of these Japs "the Yankees of the Far East," was well deserved, for they surely let no grass grow under their feet when doing business.

"Everything lovely, and the goose hangs high, old pal," was the way Danny greeted him on his arrival, still convoyed by Mr. Hawkins, who evidently did not mean to let both these enterprising fellow Americans get out of his sight during the brief stay they expected to make in Old Tokio.

Amos would not be satisfied of course until he had poked around and made Danny's opinion unanimous. Their oil tanks were full to the top, nor was there any necessity for taking aboard extra tins, since at no time in the future would their daily hop extend to more than something like two thousand miles, and sometimes it would only be a few hundred.

Long before evening approached they could find not a single additional duty to chain them to

their beloved ship. Mr. Hawkins had assured them he meant to have a couple of armed employees stand guard all night over the plane, for he planned to give his guests an opportunity to see something of the great Japanese capital while they had such a splendid opportunity.

"Of course most of the important things I'd like to have you see can only be enjoyed during the daytime," he went on to tell them, as they prepared to sally forth, Danny greatly excited over the prospect ahead, and Cool Amos taking things in his customary philosophical fashion. "There may be plenty of time tomorrow, for I half suspect that you will be detained here, even if the message is everything your hearts can wish, until the morning of the following day, which you know will mean Saturday, July sixteenth. And first of all tonight I am figuring on introducing you to a familiar countryman of ours, who is appearing nightly before a most appreciative audience, made up almost wholly of Japanese citizens—who but Charlie Chaplin, the fun-maker of the world?"

"Hot dog!" exclaimed Danny, fairly bubbling over with delight, "my favorite hero, along with Hoot Gibson and his horse."

"Well," observed their host, laughingly, "he too is always well liked over here, and was with us only last week in his latest wild Western screen triumph. We have them all, you know, about as soon as the films are released in New York city —Mary Pickford, Doug Fairbanks, Milton Sills,

a great favorite of mine by the way, and a bunch of other film aces from Hollywood. You will find it strange to be amidst a thousand native Japanese, crying *banzai!* when they feel like cheering your pet heroes; but after all the people of the whole world are about the same under the skin."

Nothing had come from the cable office up to the time the three started forth for an evening's amusement in Old Tokio, Amos and Mr. Hawkins having made arrangements for notification to be forwarded by means of telephone service, direct to the bungalow home of the latter.

Because of these precautions, that would prevent any possible delay in case the order from across the Pacific arrived while they were out, Amos felt it was all right for them to throw off the terrible strain under which he and his right bower had been laboring for the last three days; they would be all the better fitted for continuing their long aerial trip if for a brief breathing-spell the burden could be laid aside and their thoughts turned to harmless merriment.

Although their host had told them they would not be apt to see anything of a wonderful nature, now that night had come upon Tokio, he evidently overlooked the fact that even small things were novelties to these strangers in Japan, while to him these were only ordinary sights, hardly worthy of mention.

For instance the myriad of colored paper lanterns hanging from thousands of windows, over

countless doors and giving a festive look to the moonlit surroundings astounded and pleased the two visitors more than they could tell. Then there were the perfumes that filled the air from time to time, possibly coming from joss-sticks burned by faithful followers of Confucius, to be found here rubbing elbows with the worshippers of Buddha and Brahma, with Shinto priests and even modern Christians.

Just as if made to order for their benefit a fire chanced to break out while they were on their way to the motion-picture house; and along the narrow street came tearing the local fire company, with a brand new motor-engine and reel truck, to prove how up-to-date they were; while the wild clang of the *hansho* or fire-bell kept making frightful noises as if to spur the nimble fire-fighters on to their duty.

Next they met a procession winding its way through the crooked congested streets, a funeral at this odd hour of the evening, with Shinto priests heading the line, and all manner of singular lanterns being carried by those engaged in this last service for the dead.

It was in truth a strange experience for Amos and Danny to sit there within a very decent looking theatre, and find the audience that was assembling to consist almost wholly of Japanese men and women, the youngsters being apparently debarred from the night performance, and then watching the mirthful antics of their old acquaint-

ance, Charlie Chaplin, as he postured and played his pranks, all to the unbounded entertainment of the audience.

Nevertheless, while admitting that he had had a glorious time, and felt vastly better for relaxing, Danny Cooper could not long keep his mind from the matter of that expected cablegram. When finally they reached the lovely little home of their host, Danny's first question was about the message, which however had failed to arrive, so that it looked as if they might have to stay yet another day in Old Tokio.

CHAPTER XXIV

DANNY FEARS THE WORST

Several things had happened that same afternoon of July fourteenth, the day of their arrival in Tokio, which, having a bearing on a possible wish at some future date to prove their amazing accomplishment, should a skeptical public choose to look askance, ought to be chronicled here.

Thanks to Mr. Hawkins' familiarity with all such doings, as well as his undoubted popularity at the Tokio offices of the Government, the duty of viséing their passports had been easily accomplished. Consequently there it was down in black and white, placed beyond the shadow of a doubt, and stating that the two young Americans whose photographs adorned the documents, had appeared in person before the proper official, and being found *persona gratis,* he had signed their papers on that same date.

Thus armed and equipped they could face any doubting Thomas of the future, and substantiate their claim to being the first fliers to have negotiated successfully a non-stop flight between California and Japan.

The second thing bearing on this matter came to pass just when Amos was heading for a certain

place where he had agreed to join his companions after stopping in a curio store in order to purchase some little memento of his rather hurried visit to the Japanese capital.

He bumped into a man who came along as he stepped out of the shop. Starting to ask pardon for his seeming rudeness Amos broke off in the middle of a sentence, stared incredulously, and then exclaimed with a warmth quite unusual to such a cool, collected chap:

"Why, hello! Bob Esterbrook, is it you or your ghost I'm running smack into at this far corner of the world? Think of us trying to knock one another down here in Old Tokio."

"Great Caesar! if it isn't my old pal, Amos Green! Well, well, but I'm sure glad to see you again I want you to know. Now what under the sun fetches *you* across to this same Nippon which is a long ways off from your regular air-mail route?"

Bob Esterbrook chanced to be the only son of his father, and heir to the famous Esterbrook uncounted millions, his dad being one of the outstanding figures in the oil industry, and a man whose name was known all around the world. Bob had a weakness for all fliers, and would have been in the late war over in Europe only for a physical defect that caused him to be turned down as a government aviator.

He had known Amos for several years, and for a time they had been like brothers of the blood,

even though their stations in life chanced to be so far apart. Amos knew without asking that the presence of Esterbrook must be connected with some projected oil concessions, possibly over in Siberia. He had heard Bob had been trying to swing a vast deal in Persia and Turkestan in favor of his enterprising home company, and now he had to bob up serenely here. In fact the Esterbrook heir was like a flea in these days of hectic competition between British and American oil interests, playing the game with all his zeal for a thrilling win.

Really there could not have been any one who would take a keener interest in the game of Mr. Carstairs than this buoyant and adventurous young fellow. Still much as Amos might have liked taking him into the great secret that would explain his presence in Tokio on that fateful day, he had given a promise to his patron, and with him his word was always as good as his bond.

However, that need not prevent him from scenting a fine chance to get some corroborative proof such as would stand as convincing, if ever it were needed. He could ask a little favor of Bob, who, while doubtless mystified by his reticence would not hesitate on that account.

Accordingly Amos told him how it might at some future date be of considerable importance that he prove his having been in Tokio on that particular day, and would Bob write out a few

lines to the effect of having seen and talked with him, to which he would be willing to take his oath if necessary.

Bob would be only too glad to accommodate him in that simple favor, or anything else he might ask. If it were a question of money now, he had frequently tried to press a few thousand on Amos, it was still an open offer, and only too gladly—but Amos stopped him short.

"None of that, Bob; you know my sentiments along those lines and I haven't changed a bit since we last met. Why, man, I've command of almost unlimited cash, if I'd want to use it. A sacred promise keeps me from taking you into my confidence just now, but I'll tell you this much —I'm engaged in a mighty big game connected with aviation, with my pal, Danny Cooper, whom you will remember as the jolliest chap you ever met. I'm carrying out the designs of a millionaire sportsman, whose name I can't give you, because he wants to be unknown in the affair. It's a whopper of a contract we've undertaken, Danny and I; and so far we've met with splendid success. If the time ever comes when I'm allowed to open my lips I promise that you'll be the very first to hear the particulars."

Naturally he had excited Bob Esterbrook's curiosity, but seeing how bent Amos was on keeping matters secret, and knowing his principles of old, the oil king's son and heir did not press the matter, only chuckled, and proceeded to write the

few lines desired. To this declaration he signed his name and handed it over.

"Thanks a thousand times, Bob, old friend," Amos told him, reaching again for his hand. "This will answer the bill first-rate, with our passports in addition, in case we want to prove our being here in Tokio today when lots of people would swear they saw us in 'Frisco only a few days back. My pal, and Mr. Hawkins of the American Ambassador's bunch, are waiting for me down the street, so I must step along. Good-by, and good luck. Hope you get what I reckon you're after over here—that oil concession in Siberia, or does it lie on the island of Sakhalin?"

Bob Esterbrook looked after the hurrying figure of his friend, wonder written largely on his face, shook his head as though the problem were too complicated for his comprehension, and went his way to continue diplomatic struggles with the heads of rival foreign oil companies.

The night passed without anything occurring to disturb the sound slumbers of the two weary chums, and when they opened their refreshed eyes once more it was the dawn of another day, July fifteenth.

No sooner was he up and dressed than Danny began to worry again, lacking the sublime confidence that his pal seemed to have in Mr. Carstairs. What if they failed to hear from the other side of the sea as the hours crept along, each adding to the pack of gloom Danny was carrying on

his shoulders? Why, delay was the one thing to be dreaded now; after they had made such a brilliant passage across and gained several days on the time it would take any other fliers, who stopped *en route* at Honolulu and Midway Island, to be set back after all must give their project a "black eye."

Amos did his best to dispel this fit of the blues on the part of his companion; but all through that day Danny would drop back to silence which, in his case, being such a joyous fellow as a rule, meant that he was brooding.

Since everything needful had been already attended to, there was really no necessity for them to hang around the house, and wait for a message over the telephone. Mr. Hawkins had arranged a schedule with his good wife, whereby she could call him up at any one of a dozen places during the day, should it be necessary to communicate with him, or possibly he might reverse the program.

"Besides," practical Amos had told Danny, a bit severely, for he was unable to sympathize with this peculiar fit of the "dumps" into which his pal had fallen, "it's absolutely certain that we couldn't start off before morning, no matter what sort of cablegram came along. So get a grip on yourself, Danny boy, and have a heart. We may never find a chance to poke around this queer city of Tokio again, and you've just *got* to perk up and smile. Not feeling sick, I hope, are you?"

That last seemed to stir Danny more than any-

thing else that his chum had said in endeavoring to drag him out of his gloom. He realized that he was giving Amos more or less anxiety, which seemed a mean thing to do; surely there was a heavy enough load on his shoulders in acting as the responsible head of all this world flying without a pal adding to the burden by showing rank discouragement.

So he shook himself roughly, tried to grin as always, and in a fashion hide his secret fears from the searching eyes of his partner.

Really Mr. Hawkins was putting himself to all manner of trouble in order that they should have a pleasant stay of it in Tokio and environs. From one point of interest to another he hurried his charges and uncounted curious sights fell to their portion. Amos at least certainly enjoyed everything immensely, although he would have been considerably happier had he heard the hearty laugh of Danny greeting each odd spectacle along the *Nihombashi* and adjoining thoroughfares.

Every little while Mr. Hawkins would phone to his house and make inquiries as to whether anything had come from the cable offices. On each occasion Danny was wont to hold his breath and watch the face of the one at the phone, eager for the moment to read good news there, but as the day slipped away there was only a sickening repetition of "Nothing yet."

Oh! well, if the worst befell them, Danny kept telling himself for consolation, and Mr. Carstairs

had fallen down in attempting to make his far-flung arrangements, why, they could crate the ship, send it to San Francisco in the hold of a Jap liner, take passage themselves, and "crawl back like whipped puppies," as he chose to describe such sad home-coming.

But he also repeated ever so many times, with grim pleasure, how they had had a wonderful joy ride across the Pacific, and that would count for something; only it would be a shame if, after making such a glorious start, they were prevented from carrying out the remainder of the ambitious program mapped out by their "big boss."

They surveyed the interiors of curious temples, met and engaged in conversation after a fashion with Shinto priests, listened to the singing of the geisha girls in tea-houses, and later in the afternoon, when shadows had commenced to gather, witnessed the springing into life of thousands upon thousands of lanterns with multi-colored paper shades that made the scene resemble fairyland; in fact, thanks to the incomparable Mr. Hawkins, it was a red-letter day in the experiences of Amos Green.

As no communication had been held with the gentleman's cozy bungalow for several hours now Danny indulged in high hopes as they found themselves finally approaching that modest but delightful domicile. Alas! it turned out to be only a repetition of the same old story—no news had come over the wire!

CHAPTER XXV

"GO TO IT—DO YOUR STUFF!"—CONCLUSION

"BRACE up, Danny. Be a good sport, able to take knocks with the nice things that come your way! While there's life there's hope. We've got nearly two whole days leeway yet; and what if we do get behind our schedule? Haven't both of us often worked over-time to pay for lost hours, and made it too?"

In this breezy fashion did the optimistic Cool Amos seek to lift the spirits of his less confident chum, when the latter showed signs of falling into the old rut of despondency over the non-receipt of the eagerly awaited cablegram.

"That's a fact, which I must have overlooked, Amos, and it takes you to figure close to the mark every time. Lots can happen inside of two days; and besides, we're all fixed out to make a record hop-off if things should work that way. But I sure am bothered some, because it's such a big contract Mr. Carstairs has taken hold of and just one slip-up would queer the whole game."

"Well, what of that?" demanded the other, belligerently; "nothing new about what you're saying, I guess, Danny; many a time I've known you to laugh in the teeth of Old Man Trouble and give him a neat foot in the bargain. What's got into

you this time, to eat your heart out with seeing ghosts that, the chances are, exist only in your lively imagination. Did any of the good stuff we've been enjoying here with Mrs. Hawkins disagree with your old tummy, I'd like to know?"

"I should say *not!*" retorted Danny, indignantly. "Never feasted on a finer spread in all my life, even if a lot of the dishes were puzzles to me, used to plain everyday cookin' as I am. Oh! I guess I'm a lot silly to let this hold-up bother me so much. Mebbe it's just a hang-over from going on such short rations durin' the last part of our little jaunt, combined with the strain on my foolish nerves. You'll have to excuse my weakness, old pal; I'll start in once more and try to buck up."

"You've just *got* to, Danny," said Amos, severely. "We're apt to run up against stacks of disappointments if we keep on in this exploring business, hunting up new air trails in all corners of the world, because things are bound to get tangled more or less. Just make up your mind once for all that you're going to give and take, accept the good alongside the bad with a laugh, and you'll find yourself a heap happier, boy."

"I sure wish I'd been born with your way of looking at things, Amos; nothing seems to knock down your ten-pins. You just set your teeth and keep everlastingly buttin' your head against the wall till you knock a hole through and go on your way."

"You can do the same thing if only you show the nerve; and Danny, you never would own up to being yellow, or a quitter, as long as I've been running with you."

Danny pondered over this, and presently, looking at his chum a bit dubiously, he went on to say:

"Am I a quitter right now, Amos? Can you see signs of yellow in my looks? Now that you've got me thinkin' mebbe that's what ails me after all, and I just can't take a knock like I used to do. Oh! shucks! that's all rotten stuff, and I'm going to prove it to you. A quitter, and I've always vowed I hated anybody who threw up the sponge without half tryin'? Sure we'll make the count, whether we get the word from Mr. Carstairs or not, before it's everlastingly too late. There are other big things he'll be wantin' us to hitch our wagon to, and this game of flyin' around the bully old globe in fourteen days c'n wait a while."

"I don't believe for a minute it will have to, Danny."

"Which is the same as sayin' you haven't given up hope yet, eh, what?" demanded the other, eagerly.

"Not by a jugful, I haven't. I've studied Mr. Carstairs lots while in his company and I know him like a book. He's just about as set in his way as—well, as a fellow you ought to know right well, since his name is Amos Green; and it'd have

to be something a heap more than common to make *him* change his mind. If we don't hear to-night we sure will tomorrow."

These sanguine words must have braced Danny more than any that had preceded them, for he actually grinned, as though he had finally succeeded in casting out that gloom devil from his system.

"Tomorrow—that'd be the sixteenth, wouldn't it?" asked Danny.

"You said it," came the terse reply.

"And even if we held over another night in Tokio, Amos, we'd still be a whole day ahead of the schedule we arranged, wouldn't we?"

"Right you are, and then some. Just make up your mind it's bound to come out as we planned, and then forget things. Do as I do, pack up your troubles in your old kit-bag and then kick it overboard. There's heaps of good times left in this old world to be tapped by two such hustlers as we claim to be."

So Danny set himself to the task of keeping his mind on things other than the non-appearance of any news from over-seas. He paid particular attention to the appetizing dishes that were passed around by the expert Jap butler; joined in hearty laughter when Mr. Hawkins, who was in great spirits, because of the pleasure he found in the company of these two wideawake lads from his own country and told numerous stories, some of which were exceedingly humorous; and in many

other ways Danny showed his chum that he had actually succeeded in borrowing some of that never-say-die spirit, by which Amos was always able to control his own nerves.

Later on they sat in the dainty little boudoir that smacked so much of quaint Japanese customs, chatting with their genial host and his charming wife. Amos avoided all mention of their late experiences in carrying out so clever an air voyage, nor was anything said during the evening touching on further adventurous undertaking connected with making a speedy circuit of the earth.

It was getting late, the two children had been put to bed, and Danny found himself secretly yawning behind his hand, when, without warning, there rang out the buzzing of the phone bell. Danny almost jumped from his chair, then remembering that late promise to his chum he drew a long breath, sank back, and pretended to be utterly unconcerned. Mr. Hawkins himself sprang up and went to the phone.

Even stoical Amos found more or less difficulty in holding his feelings in check when he saw the other scribbling something on the handy pad. Then it actually began to look as though the tardy message from abroad must have been received, and was even then being transmitted from the cable offices in Tokio.

It was indeed a most thrilling moment for those two tried and true pals. They realized that history along the line of daring aviation flights was

in the course of the making in that brief period of time.

Then Mr. Hawkins hung up the receiver and advanced toward his guests. When he saw the beaming expression on the face of the friendly attache of Uncle Sam's Japanese Embassy Danny's wildly throbbing heart seemed to try its best to climb up in his throat, for he scented the fruition of his most ardent hopes in the surcharged air.

Amos, as always, at least outwardly cool and collected, took the extended paper without even a finger trembling, glanced over the disjointed and terse sentences and then smiled at his agitated chum.

"We leave Tokio at eight to-morrow morning, Danny," he was saying in the most matter-of-fact tone imaginable.

"Hot dog! Bound where?" gurgled the other, swallowing hard.

"First stop Harbin, Manchuria, distant about eleven hundred miles as the crow flies," Amos informed him, himself now smiling broadly.

With these thrilling words Amos thrust the relayed cable message into the eager hand of his navigator. Danny read every word, and they seemed seared upon his brain as with a red-hot branding iron. The instructions ran:

"Get busy and go to it—everything arranged—do your stuff boys and keep me ad-

vised as you carry on. Congratulations on your splendid flight. God bless you both.

Carstairs"

Such a wonderful grin flooded the freckled face of Danny Cooper as under the excitement of that eventful moment he delivered himself as follows:

"Hot dog! that's *our* Mr. Carstairs who never does things by halves. I'll let the world know he's what you might call an unqualified wow!"

THE END

What extraordinary good fortune attended Amos and his loyal pal in their further progress along the line of scientific aviation, as well as the multitude of stirring adventures which lay in wait along the course of their record-breaking flight around the world, will be found between the covers of the next volume of this series, entitled: "MASTERS OF THE AIR-LANES; or, AROUND THE WORLD IN FOURTEEN DAYS."